

the gods lie.

kaori
ozaki





the gods lie.

kaori
ozaki

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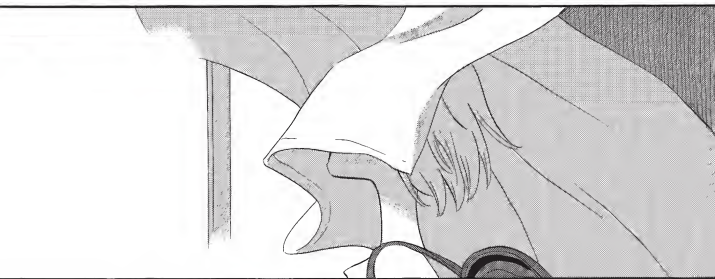
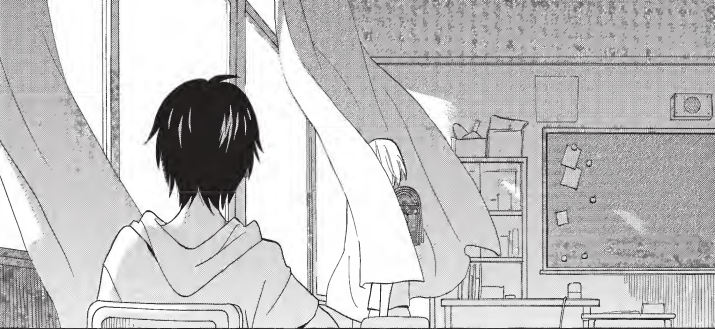
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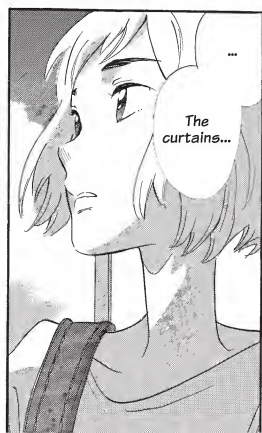
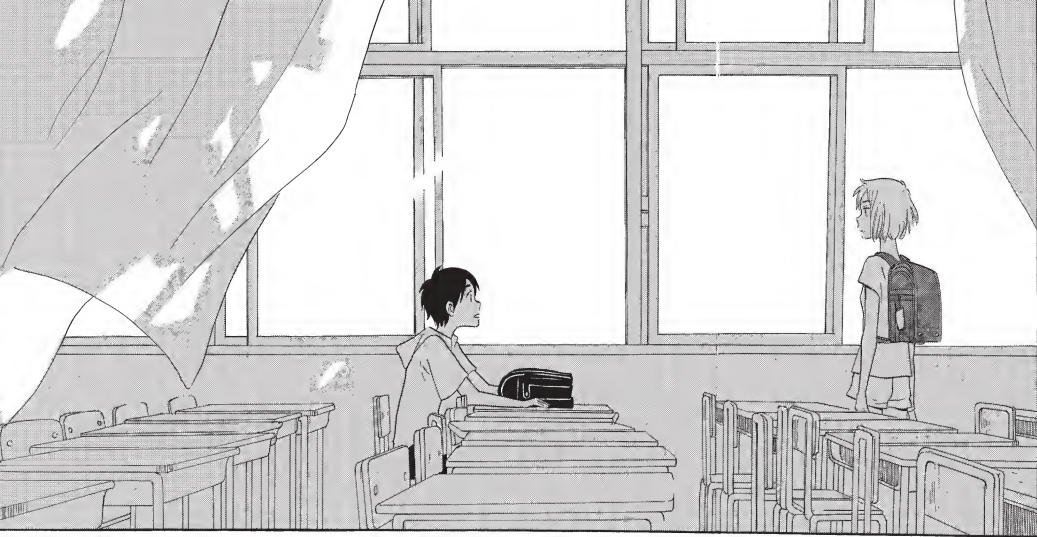


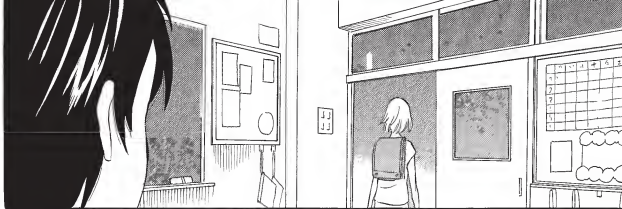
chapter 1

It was the
summer
when I
was 11.

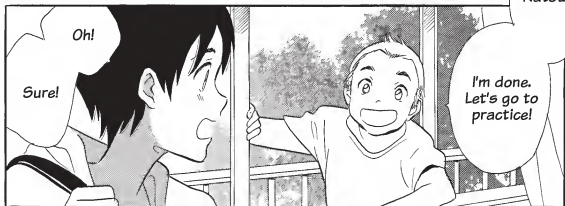








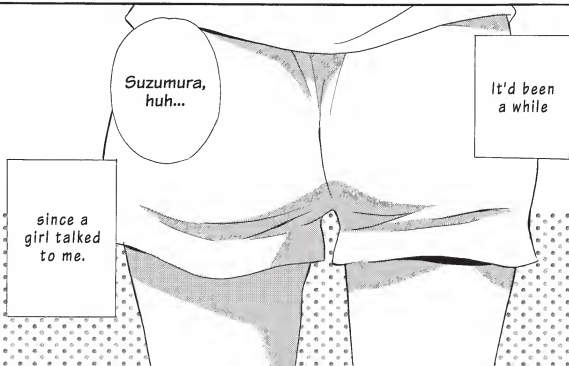
Natsuru!



Oh!

Sure!

I'm done.
Let's go to
practice!



Suzumura,
huh...

It'd been
a while

since a
girl talked
to me.



Yeah, but
where are
her boobs?

At this rate,
by the end of
summer break
she's gonna be
taller than the
teachers.

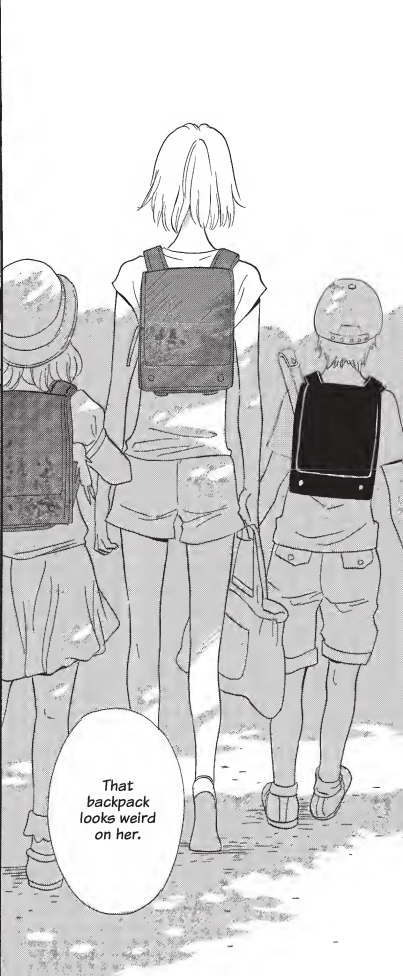


Idiot
!

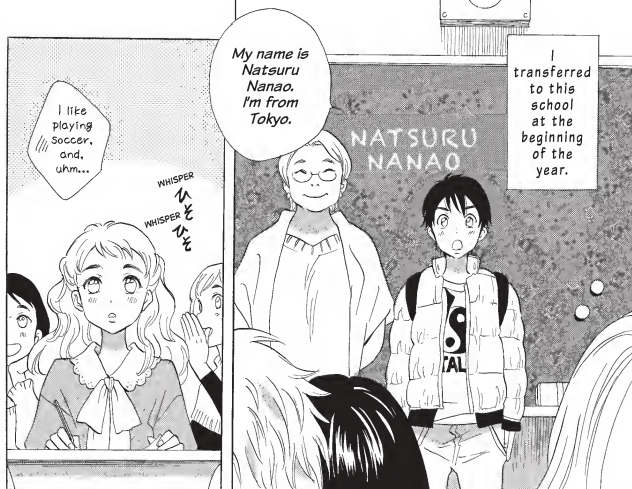
Don't
say
stuff
like
that!

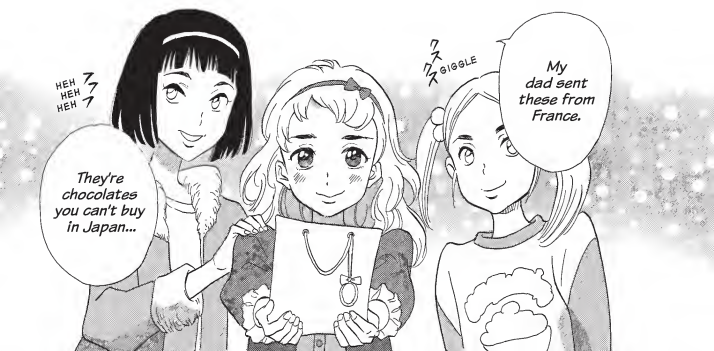


Girls at
school
don't talk
to me.



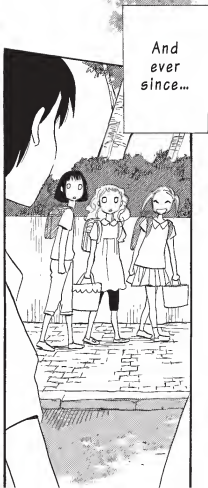
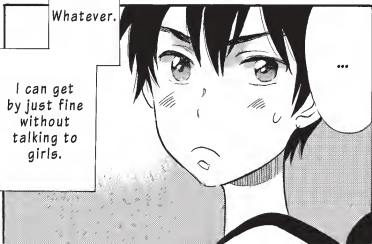
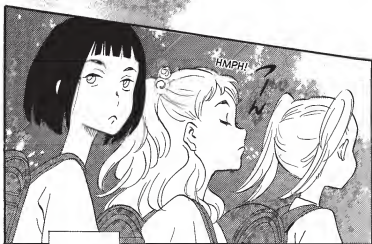
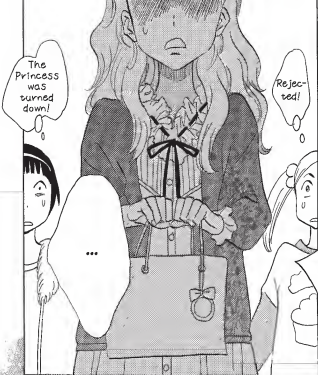
That
backpack
looks weird
on her.





* "Hime" means "princess," hence her nickname







Right?

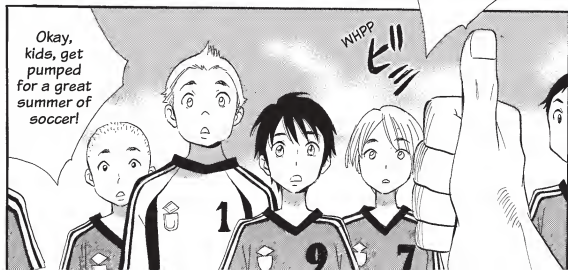
'cause
I've got
soccer!

Boys,
let me
introduce
you

to your
new
coach...



Maruo
Sakai
!!



Okay,
kids, get
pumped
for a great
summer of
soccer!

WHPP
!!

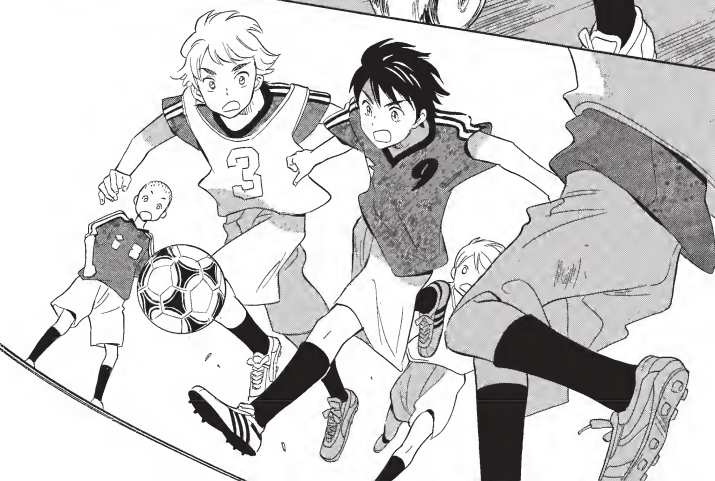
Mr. Okada
was just
volunteering
because
he's with the
neighborhood
association
...

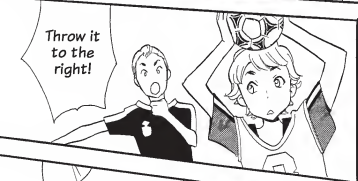
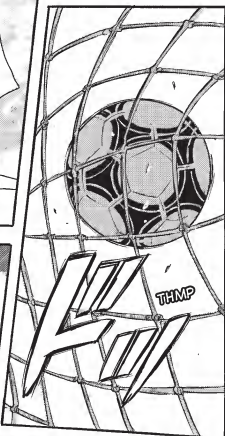
But Coach
Sakai has a
JFA license.

Lucky for
you!

What
happened
to Coach
Okada?

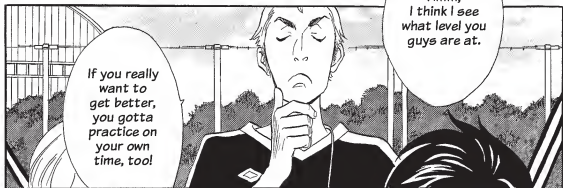
Huh?
Why's
there a
new coach
all of a
sudden?







Hmm,
I think I see
what level you
guys are at.



If you really
want to
get better,
you gotta
practice on
your own
time, too!



What,
your
mom's
single?

Poor
kid.

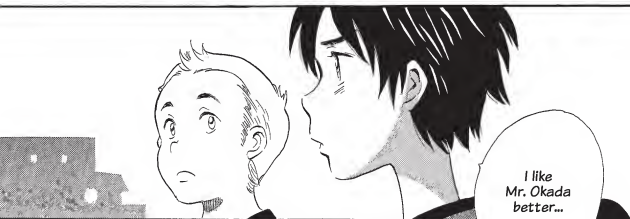


Makes
for great
quality time
with your
dad, too.

YEP.

Not just
juggling, but
practicing
passes with
your dad on
days off, that kinda
thing.

Uhm...
I don't have
a dad, so I
can't...



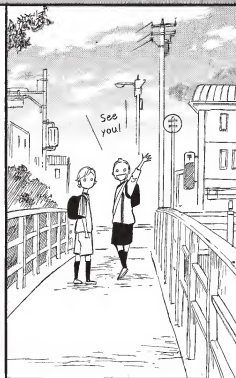


He's got cancer.

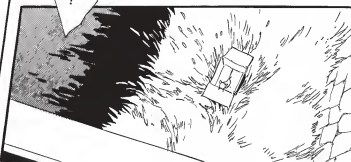
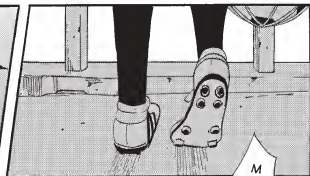


Mr. Okada is at Aizawa Hospital.

By the way, my mom told me

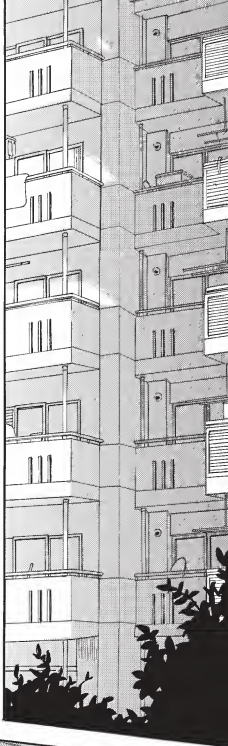
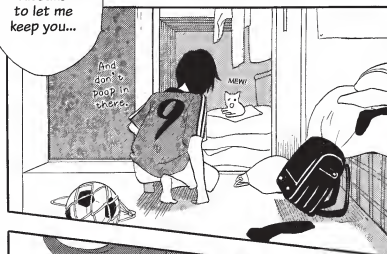


See you!





I'll go convince Ritsuko to let me keep you...





What?!

They said
Mr. Okada
is in the
hospital
with cancer.

Hey,
Rits,
we got a
new soccer
coach
today.

He...

He
will not!!
Don't say
stuff like
that!!

People
die from
cancer,
don't they?

Is
Mr. Okada
gonna die?

KLATTER
#A

Your dad
just had
bad luck.

All
done!

Okay,
some-
times
people
die...

But Dad
died...



Uhm...



But
it's so
relaxing.



It's gonna
be okay,
Nats.



Could
you stop
kneading
my boobs?

SQUEEZE
ふに

SQUEEZE
ふに
SQUEEZE
ふに

ACH
OOO!

Oh, so
...

I wanted
to ask
you if we
could...

We'll
go visit
Mr. Okada
sometime.

Yeah.

It won't
sto...

-PCHOO!

ACHOO
!!

CHOO
!!

What
is...

You pet
a cat
didn't
you!

トキ

BA

DUM

N...
Natsuru!

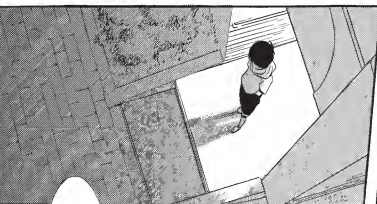
I told
you I'm
allergic!

If you come
home with
so much as
one cat hair
on you,
I can't
breathe!!

WHEEZE
ウー
WHEEZE

Don't
lie to
me!

I... I
didn't...



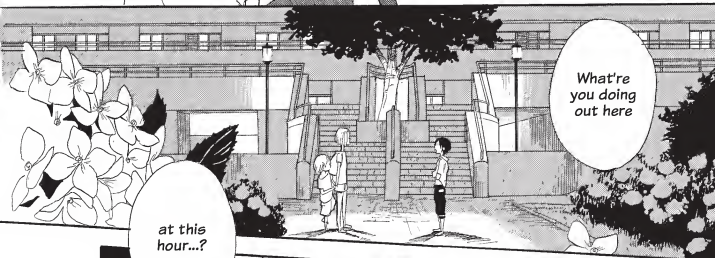
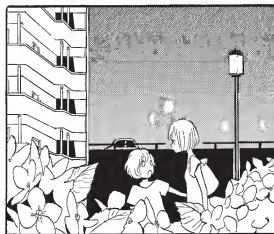
...

What
should
I do...

MEOW
にゃー

Go
outside
and brush
yourself
off!

Now I
gotta
clean!
Don't
come back
in 'til I'm
done!!





Are you allergic or anything?

Oh, hey, could you take this cat home?



My place is right here.

What about you, Nanao...?



Wow! Kitty!!

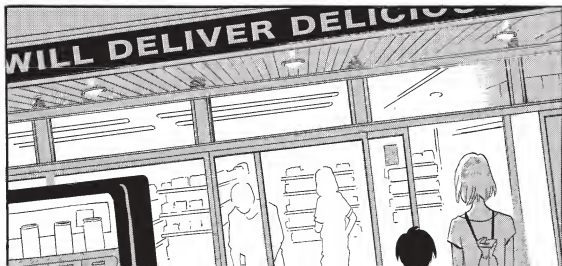


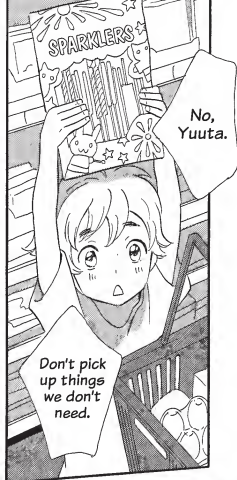
We can take care of it...

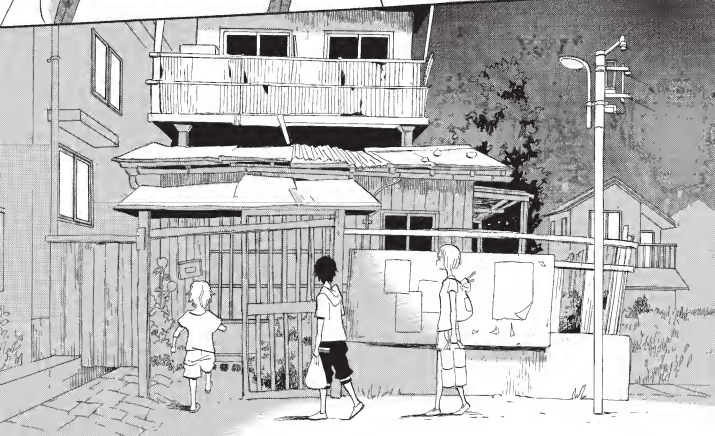
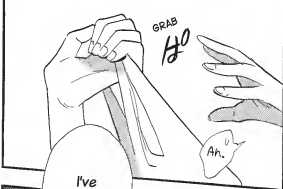
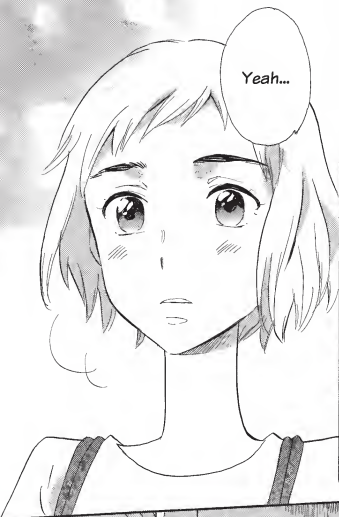


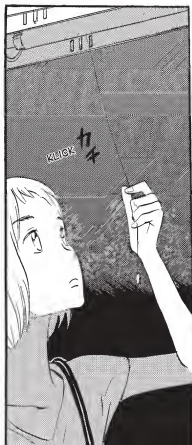
Yuuta!

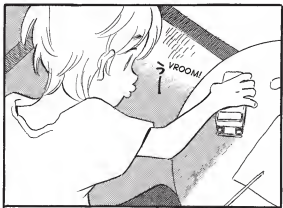


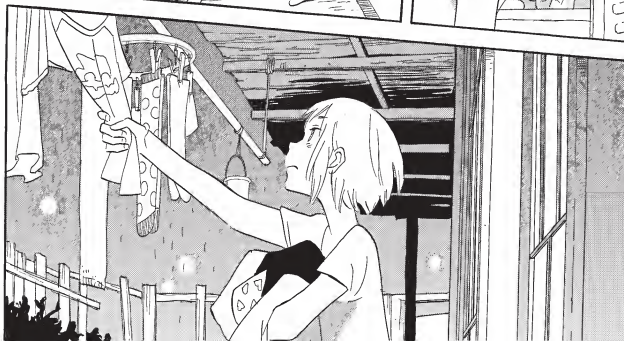


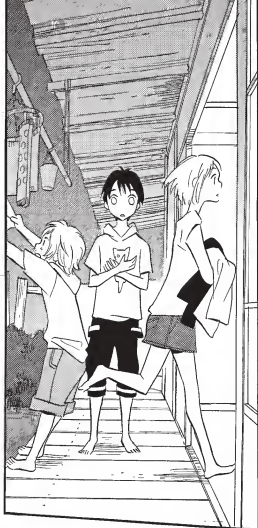
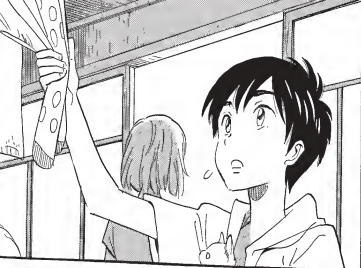


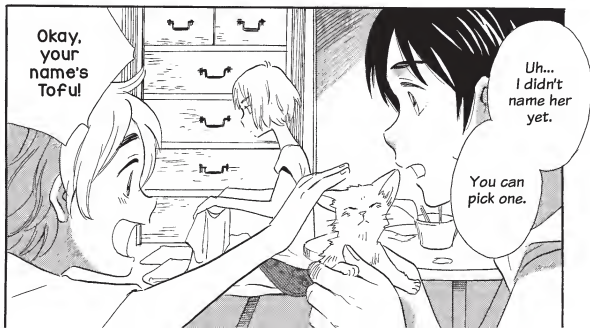
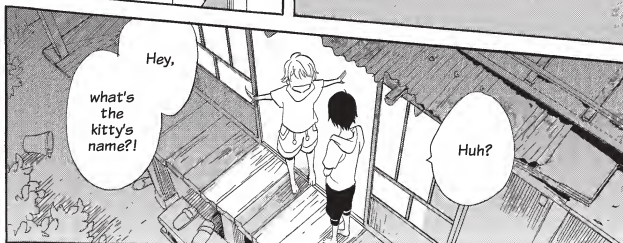
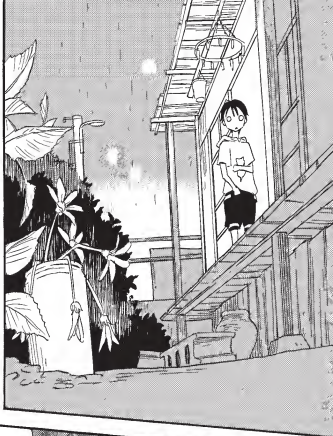


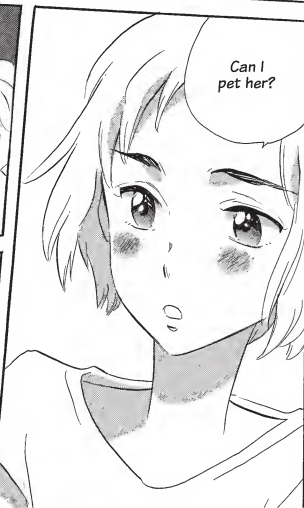
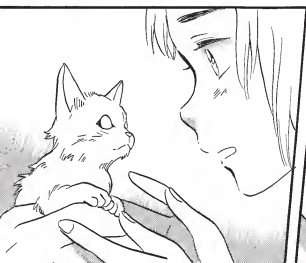
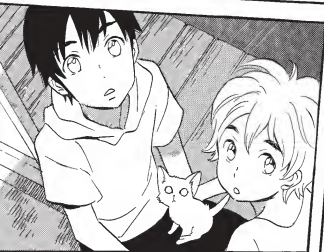
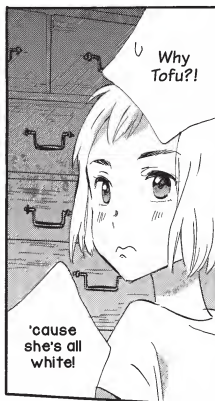


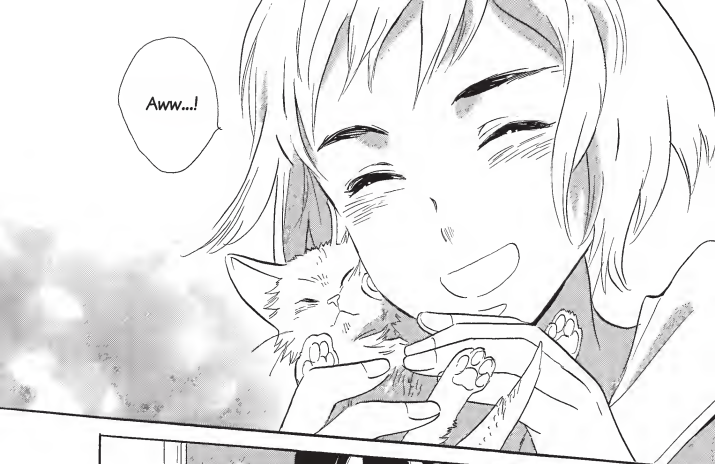




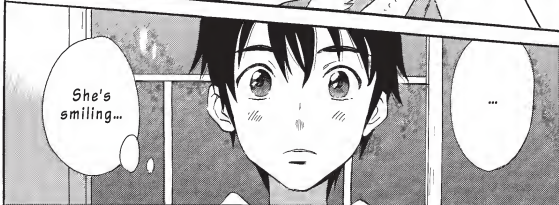








Aww...!



She's smiling...

...



Don't you have to talk it over with your...

Are you sure, Suzumura?

No. It's fine.



We won't abandon you.

It's okay...

A large, close-up, black and white illustration of a young man's face. He has dark, spiky hair and large, expressive eyes. He is looking slightly to the side with a serious expression. The background is dark and textured.

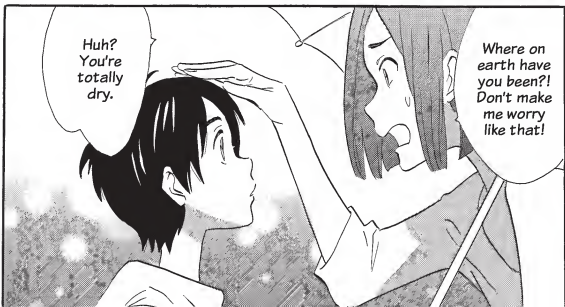
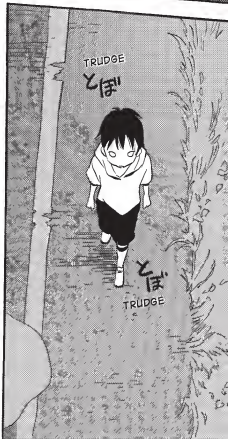
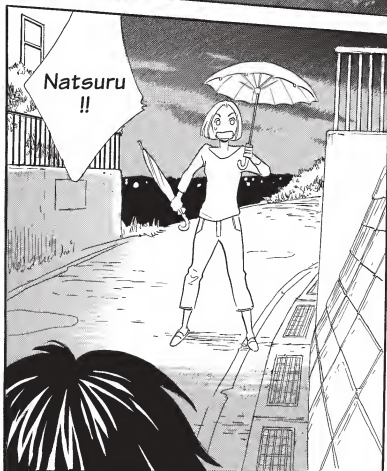
Don't
tell
anyone
...

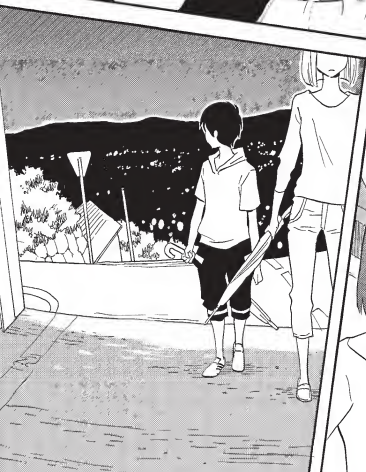
Okay,
Nanao?

A black and white illustration of a young woman and a young boy standing together. The woman is on the right, taller, with short hair, wearing a t-shirt with a cat design and shorts. She is holding a small cat. The boy is on the left, shorter, with short hair, wearing a t-shirt and shorts. He is making a 'shh' gesture with his finger to his lips. They are both looking towards the viewer. The background is light and textured.

It's
just

the two
of us
here...





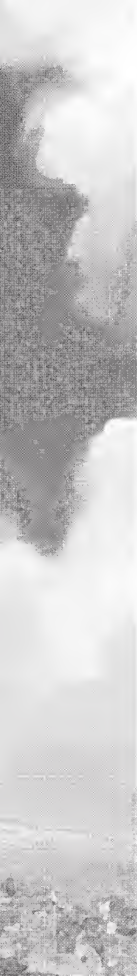


I see...

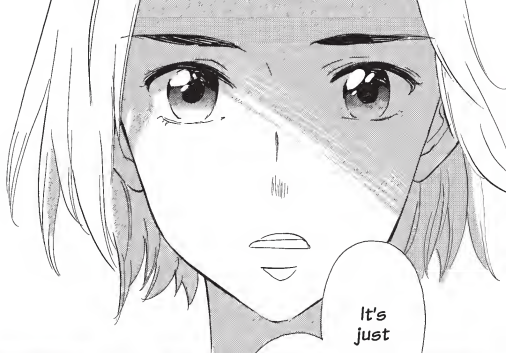
They only
shine if
someone
is home.

All
those
lights...

It's
almost
summer
vacation.







It's
just

the two
of us
here.



Don't
tell
anyone...

Okay,
Nanao?



chapter 2



Make
your
turns
tighter!

Once
you're
done, go
do some
sprints!

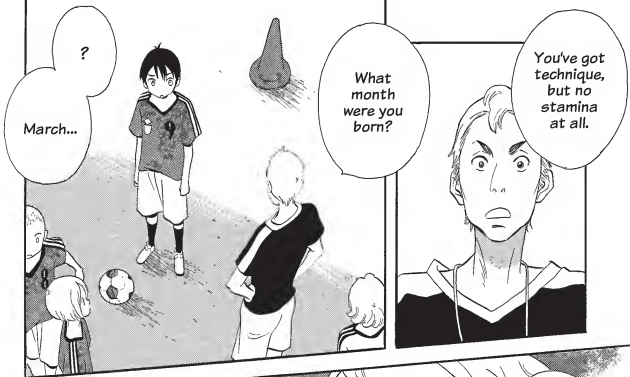


It's too
soon for
you to be
tired out,
Nanao!



I played
soccer
over
summer
vacation,
too.





March...

What month were you born?

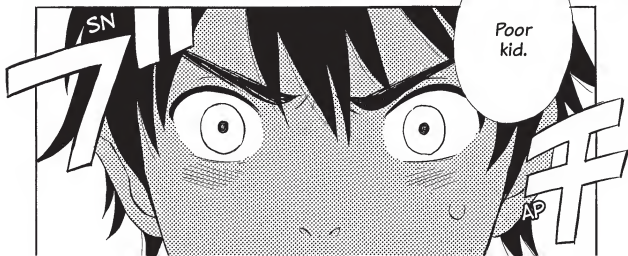
You've got technique, but no stamina at all.



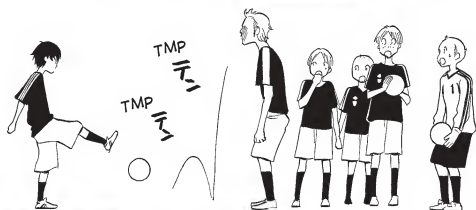
And you're pretty small for a sixth grader.

An early birthday ends up being a disadvantage in sports, y'know.

Ah... Yeah, too early in the year.



Poor kid.



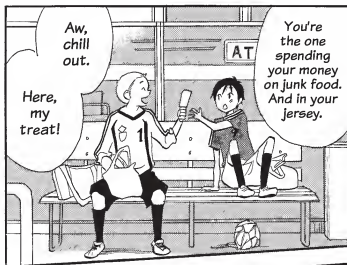
There he is,
the bad boy
striker!



Aw,
chill
out.

Here,
my
treat!

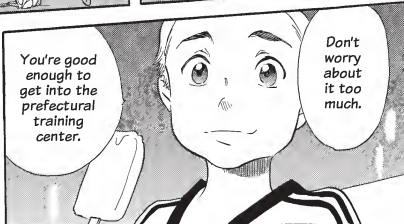
You're
the one
spending
your money
on junk food.
And in your
jersey.



Hmm...



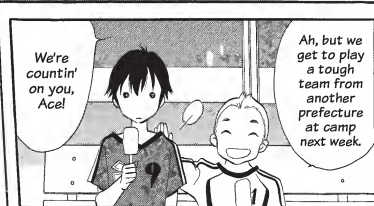
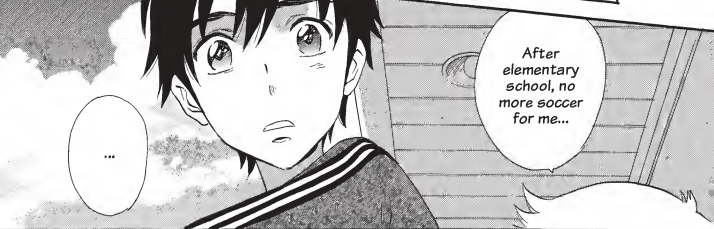
You're good
enough to
get into the
prefectural
training
center.

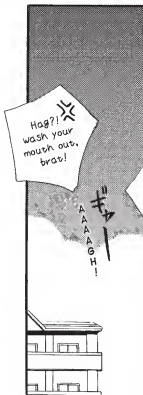


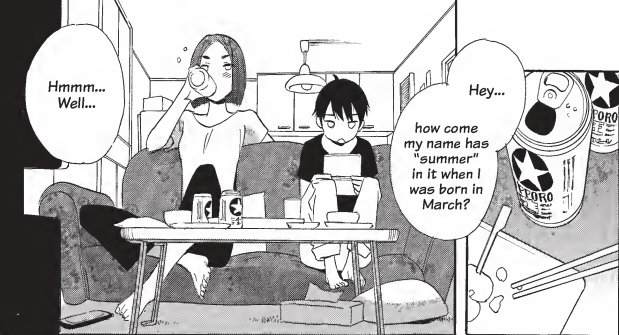
Don't
worry
about
it too
much.

I just hope
Coach Okada
gets out of
the hospital
soon...









Hmmm...
Well...

Hey...

how come
my name has
"summer"
in it when I
was born in
March?



"If he can
hold out
until summer,
he'll be just
fine."

Well, the
doctor said
to us,

Uh-
huh.

When you
were born,
you were
very small.

I told
you how
you needed
surgery, and
we weren't
sure you'd
make it,
right?

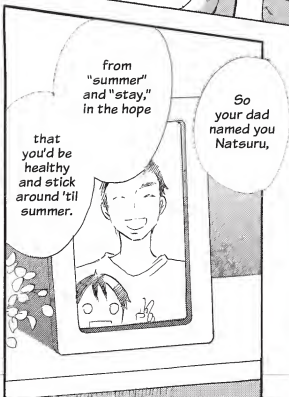


And now
look at you!
Grown up
into a
soccer
kid!

Seems
like a dream
sometimes.



Hmm...



from
"summer"
and "stay,"
in the hope

that
you'd be
healthy
and stick
around 'til
summer.

So
your dad
named you
Natsuru,

B...
But... It's summer
vacation...

Huh?

In return,
when you
finish, we can
go to the
movies and
get Chinese.

It's fine!

I can have
watermelon
at
Grandpa's.

Rits, how
about I go
stay at
Grandpa's
house until
you finish
writing?

It's
easier to
concentrate
if you're
alone,
right?

You know
what bus
to take,
right?

All right...
Sorry, but
can you go
to Grandpa's
straight from
soccer
camp?

You don't
need to act
so mature
that quickly,
you know.

But I
appreciate
it.

That's
really
sweet...

Um, about
soccer
camp...

Ah,

right...

Nats.



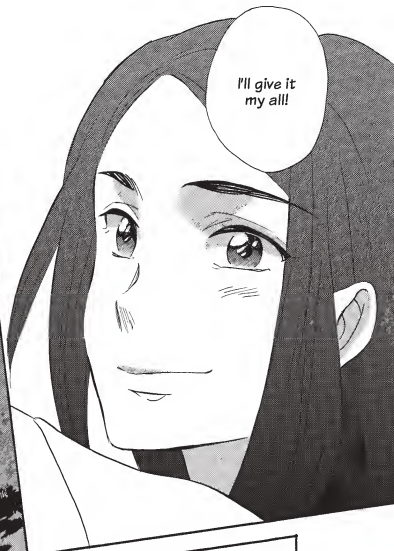
Got your
phone?

Yeah.

Your
homework?

Yup.

I'll give it
my all!



okay...

Uh...



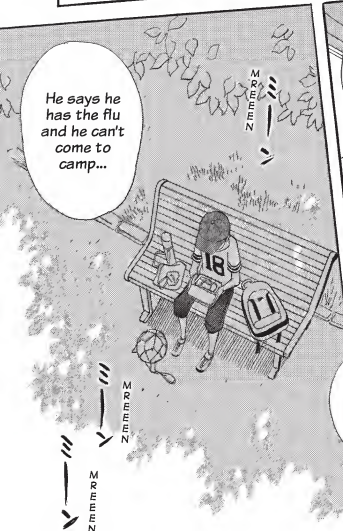




What're
you doing?
Everyone's
on the bus,
we're waiting
for you...



Uh, hi,
Natsuru?



He says he
has the flu
and he can't
come to
camp...



What's
wrong?

Why
not?!

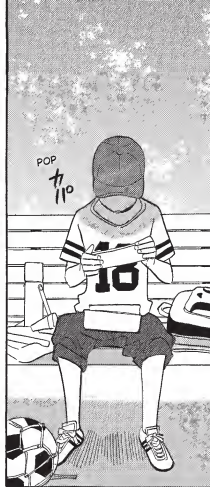
Huh?

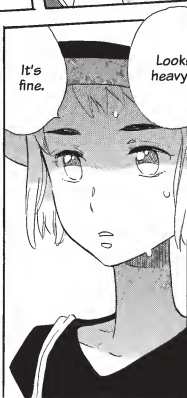
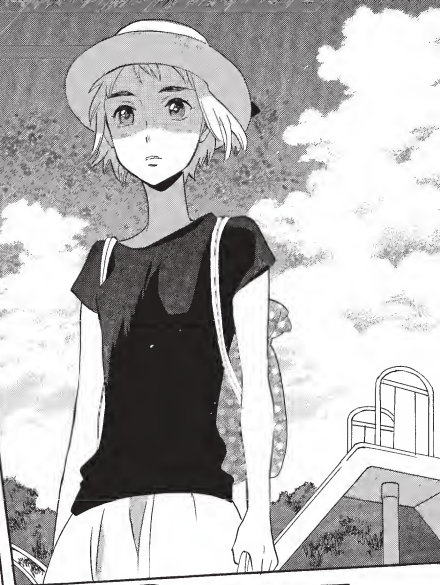
What?



It's
Natsuru...

Coach...





You hate soccer?

...

No, I love it.

But then... I...

didn't want to get on the bus...

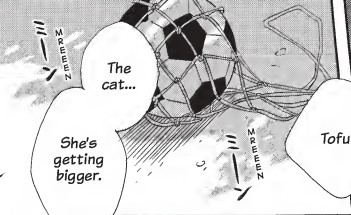
I was...

supposed to go to soccer camp today.

I love it, but still...!

...

ホッ
ン
ン
KICK



The cat...

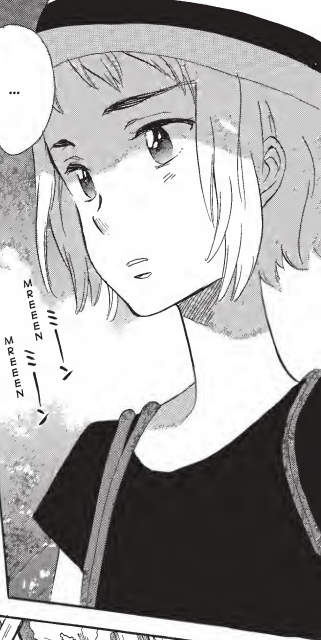
She's getting bigger.

Tofu...

...



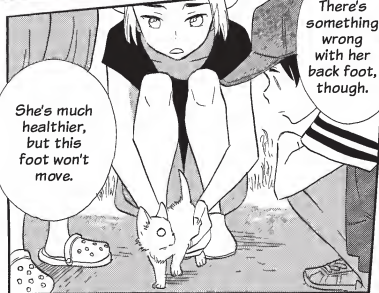
MREEM
MREEM
MREEM



Yuuta!

Sis, you
brought
your boy-
friend!

Ah!



She's much
healthier,
but this
foot won't
move.

There's
something
wrong
with her
back foot,
though.

I'd like to
take her
to the
vet, but...

You're
right.

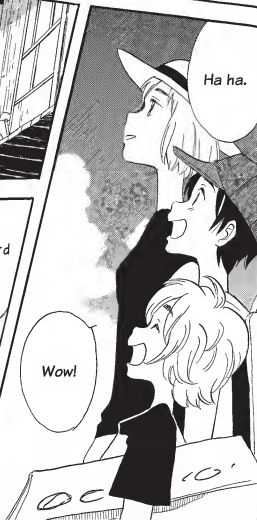
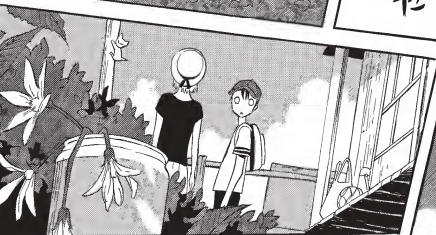
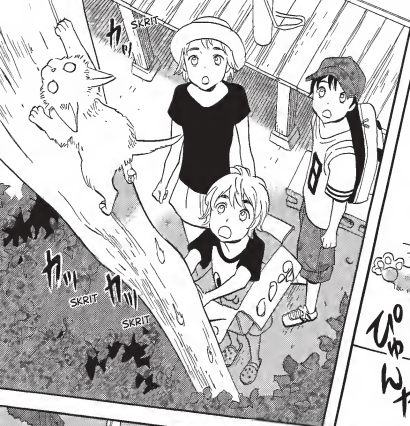
Maybe
it's
broken...



Wow,
Tofu!

You're all
soft and
fluffy!

Silken tofu.



Those
were
meant to
be soccer
balls,
right?

It was
really
good...

Uh-huh,
I ate it.

Y-Yeah
...

Just
got
here...

Oh!
Ri—

Mom?!

I'm gonna
be on Real
Madrid
someday!

HA HA

Okay,
practice is
starting...

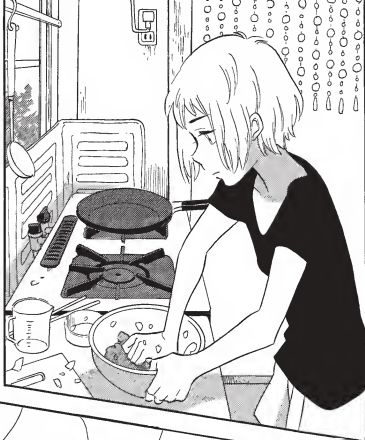
Yeah,
I will!

Now
what?

WHEW

Tuna
burgers.

What're
you
making?



Our
dad's a
fisherman.
He's rarely
home.
Right now
he's crab
fishing in
Alaska.

We're only
in sixth
grade!

Wow!

Huh?

My
mom only
gets the
frozen
stuff.

Huh?
?

You can
make
that
yourself
!?

What
do you
do for
money?

Suzumura
...

But he
gives us
money when
he's back.

are
you two
really
living
alone?



Don't
tell
anyone.

If people
find out, we'll
get taken in by
child welfare or
something and
they won't let
us stay in
this house.



She left
a long
time
ago.

What
about
your
mom...?

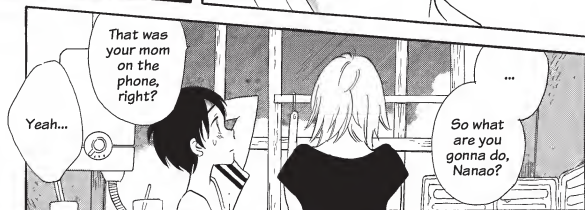
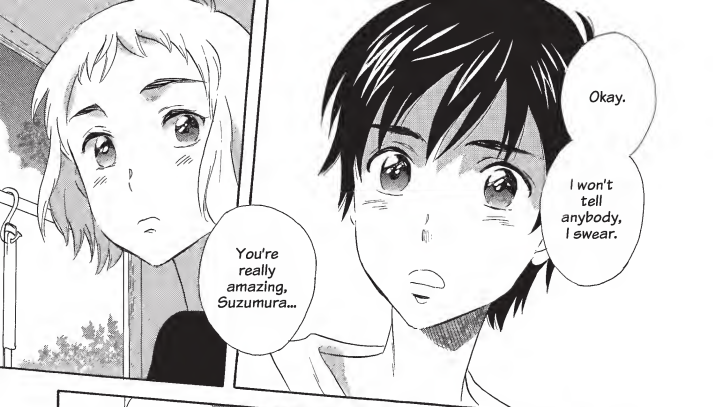


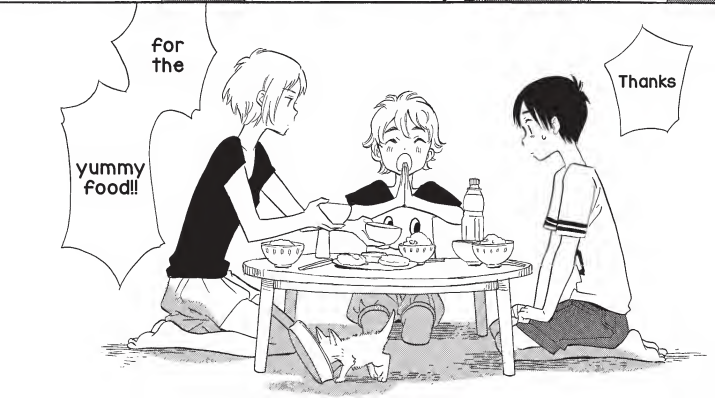
Then Dad
would be all
alone...

Besides,
the two
of us

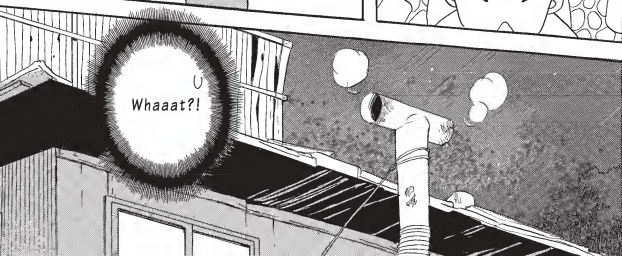
are doing
all right...

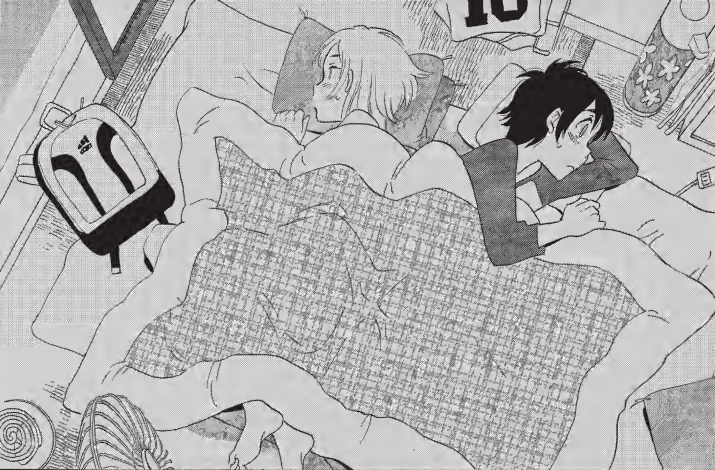
SQUISH











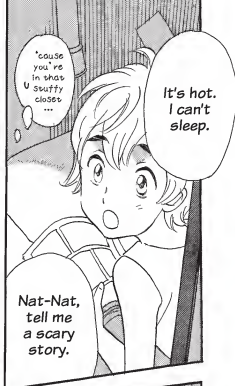


A scary story?

Okay...

This is the best one I know.

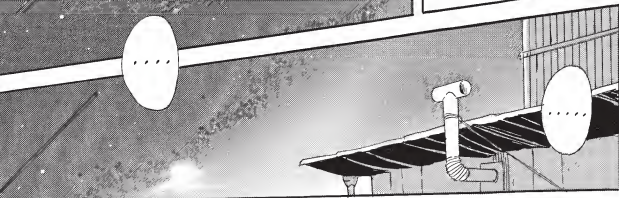
Now, I heard this story from my mom...



Nat-Nat, tell me a scary story.

'cause you're in that stuffy closet ...

It's hot. I can't sleep.



NOW I'VE FOUND YOOOU!!

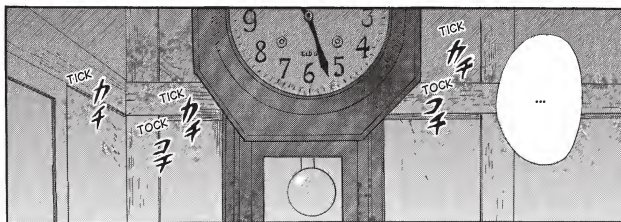
And then, she turned around and said:

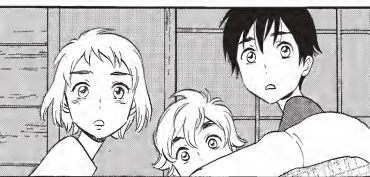
Hey...

Are you...

SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

SHIVER
SHIVER
SHIVER





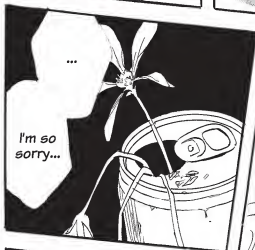
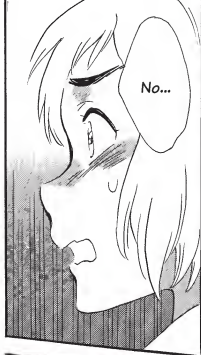
Do
you

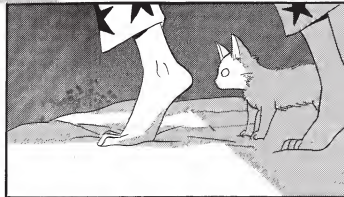
believe in
ghosts?

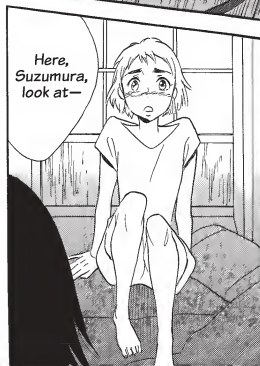
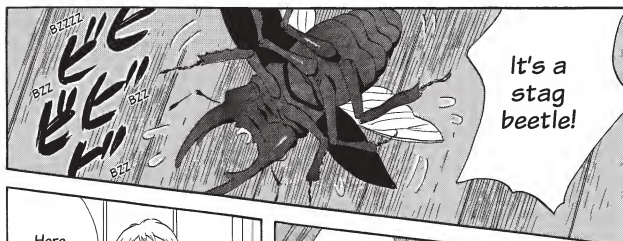
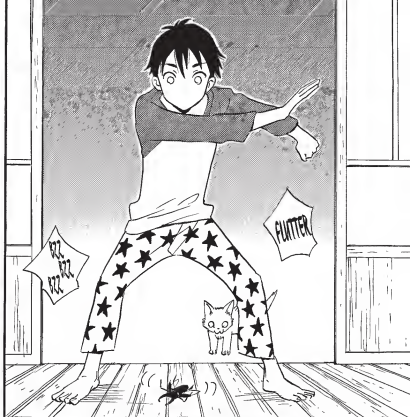


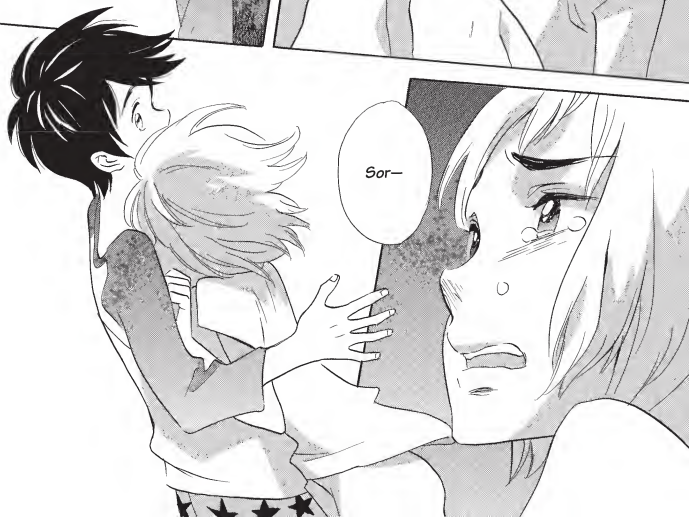
Someone's
tapping
on the
window...?

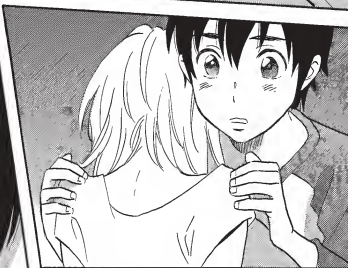
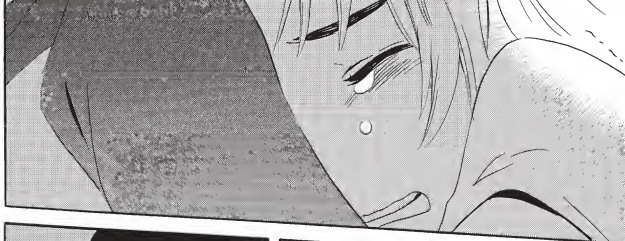
Wh...
What
was
that...







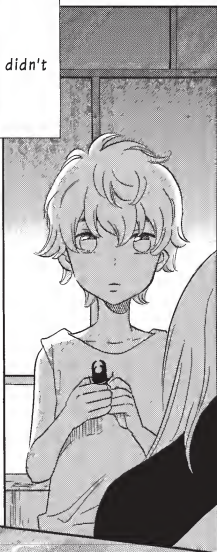






I didn't

know
the real
reason
that she
was
crying.



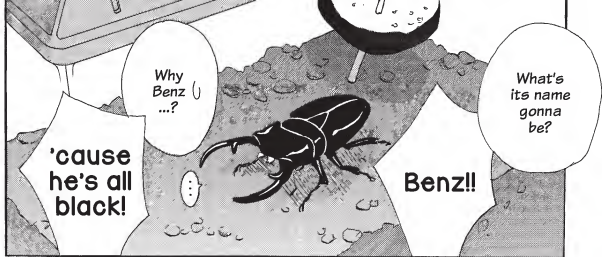
I was just
carried
away by
the feeling
of her in
my arms,

trembling
and
warm.



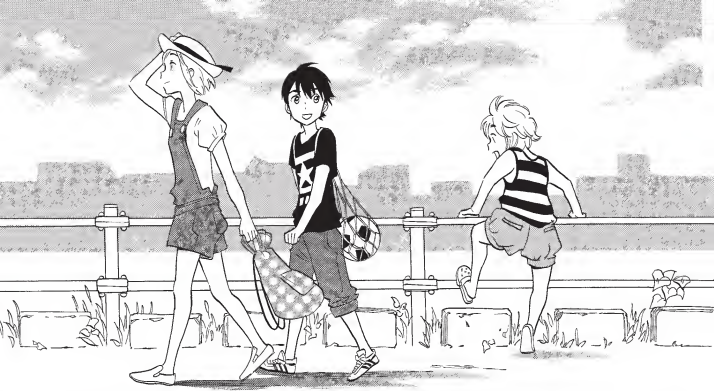
chapter 3





WHAT	HOW MUCH
SOAP	98
BATTERIES	385
MILK	198







Yaaaah!



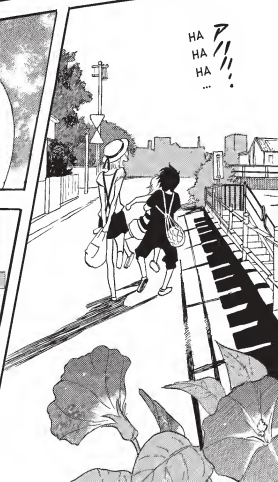
Then
what
if we
go like
this?



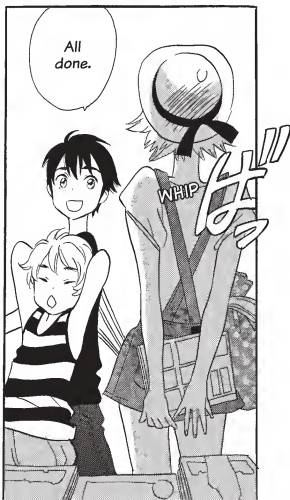
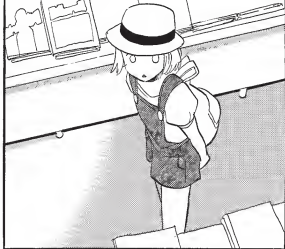
I wanna
read the new
Jump.

Sure.

Can we
stop at
the book-
store?



HA
HA
HA
...



Let's
go.

...No.

It's not
something
we need...

390
yen...

You
want
them?

Be home
by lunch,
okay?

Okay!

I'll go
ahead
home.



Somehow...

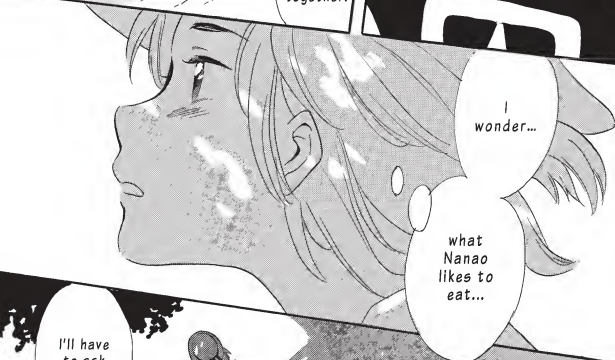


it feels
like we're
really
living
together.

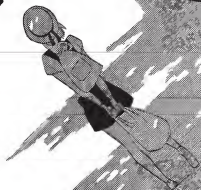


I
wonder...

what
Nanao
likes to
eat...



I'll have
to ask
him...



Ugh,
you're all
sweaty!

Change
your
clothes
and feed
Tofu!

Sis!
Lunch
please!

We're
hooome!

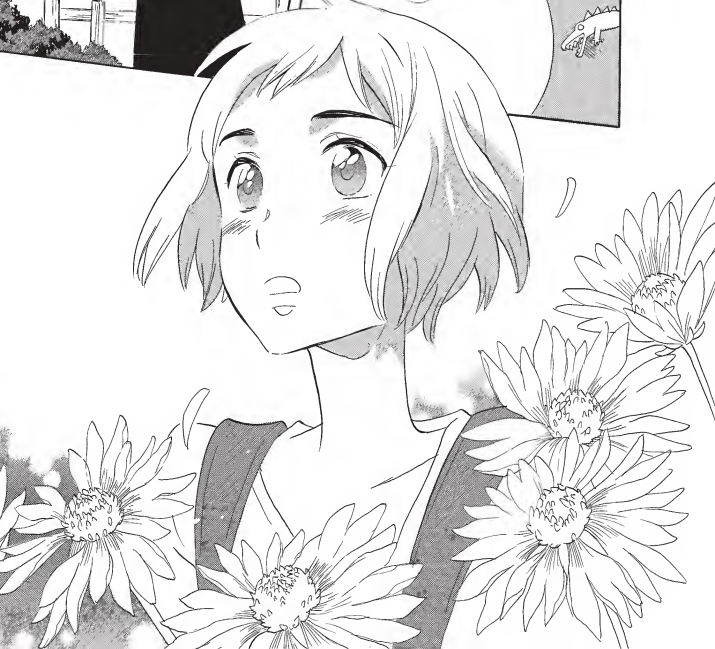
We're
back...

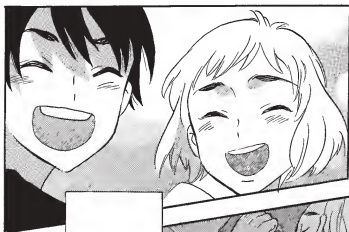
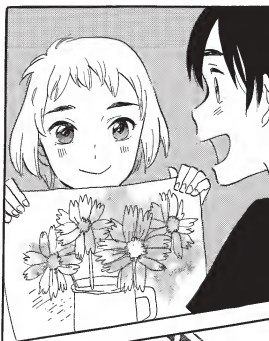
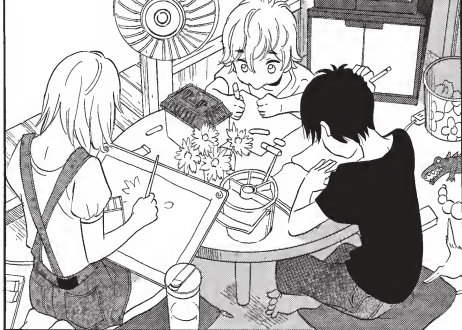
Sure!

Nanao, the
laundry's
done,
would
you hang
up your
stuff?

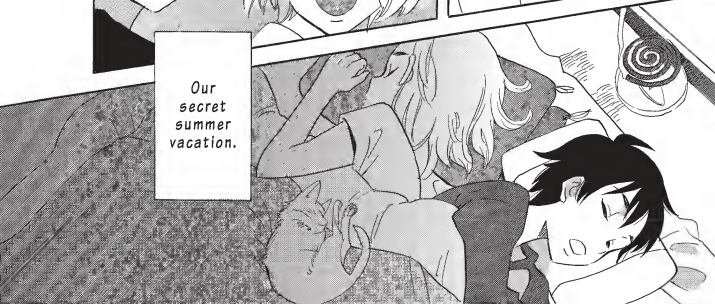
"Sure,"
he
says...

HEH
HEH





Our
secret
summer
vacation.





Whuh?



We've got a busy day!

Then...
I should
go
home...

He'll get
mad...

Huh...?



Stay
here.

I'll
introduce
you.

No, it's
okay!

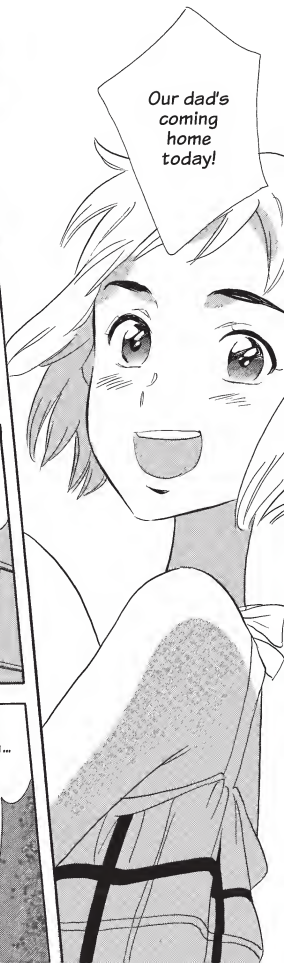


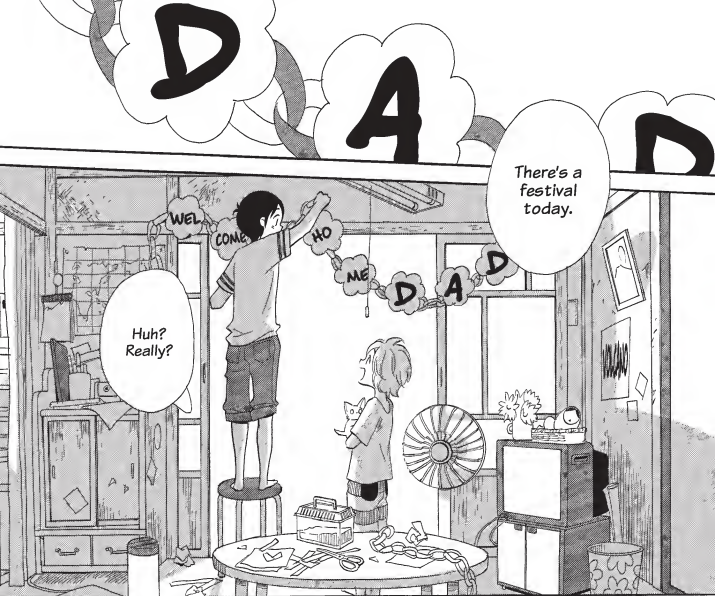
In...

Introduce
me?!



Our dad's
coming
home
today!





They close
all the
roads to
cars and
everyone
in town
dances!

Wow!

You've
never been,
Nat-Nat?

Dad
always
takes
us!

They're in
the drawer
in Grandpa's
room.

Sis, we
need thumb—

Do you
have any
thumb
tacks?

It won't
stay
up with
tape.

Okay.

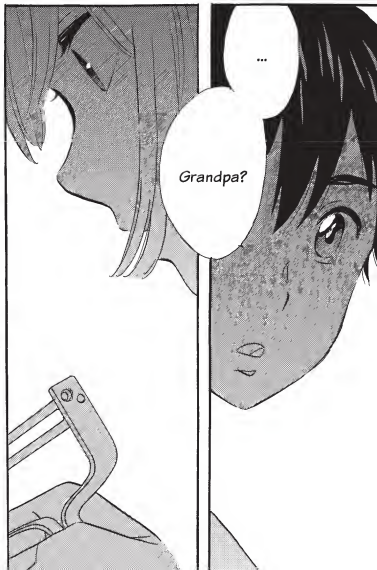


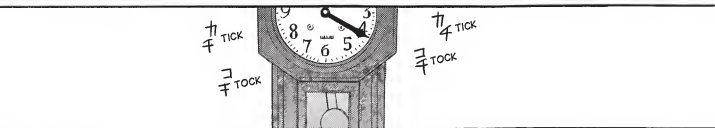
S...
Sorry,

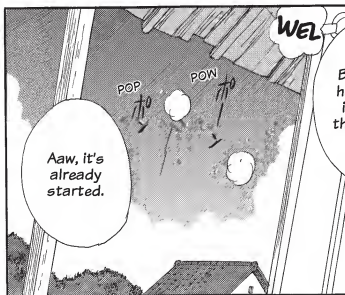
I meant
Dad's
room...



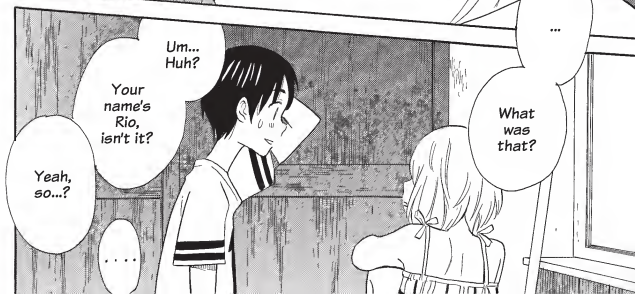
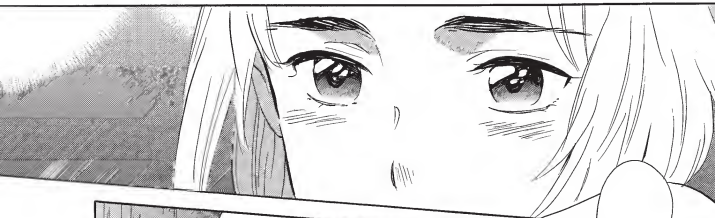
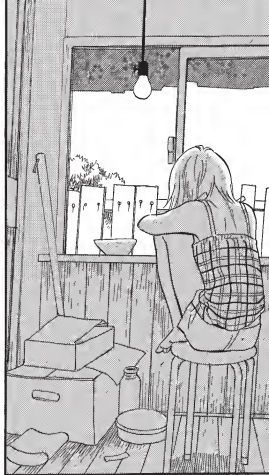
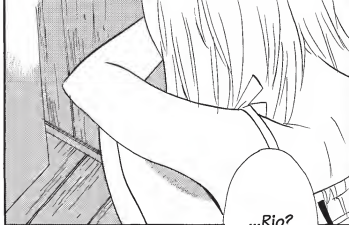
Grandpa?

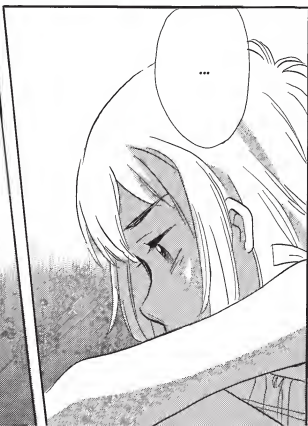
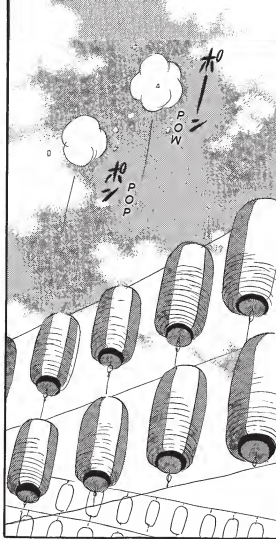


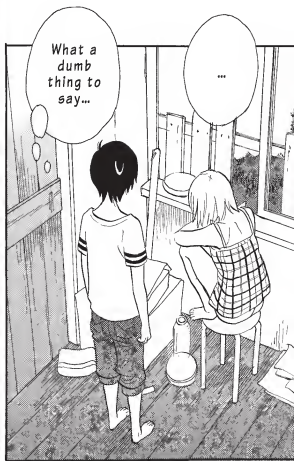


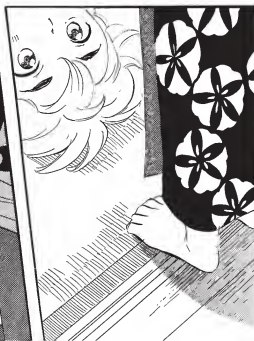
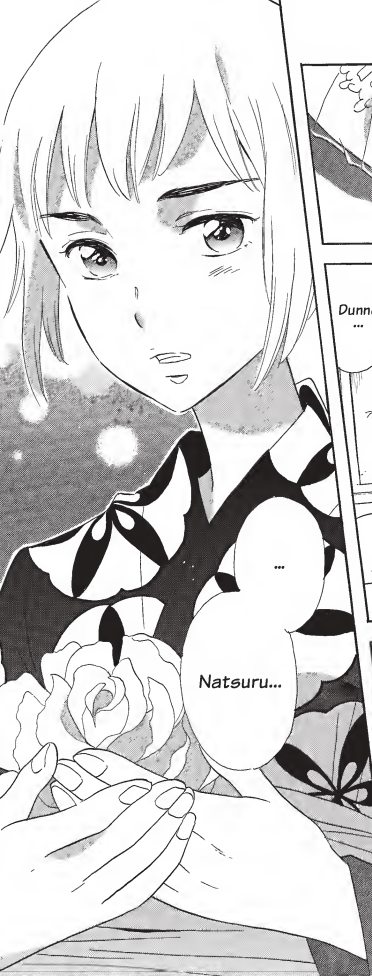






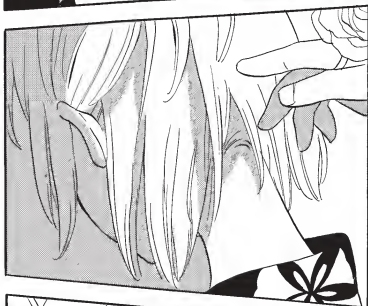






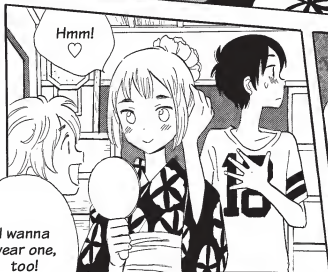
put
this
in my
hair?

Will
you



Hmm!
♡

I wanna
wear one,
too!



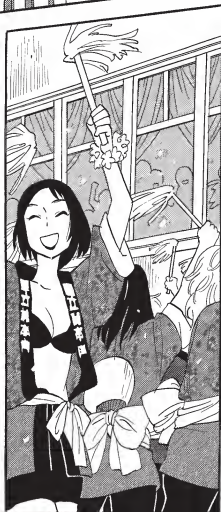
whaa
?

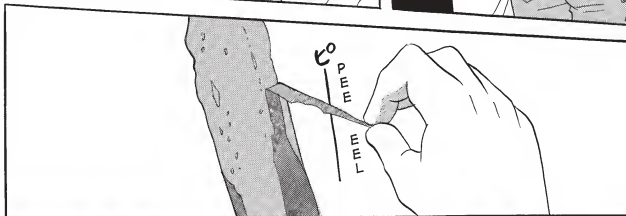
Your
yukata got
eaten by
moths.



I...
can't
do it
right...



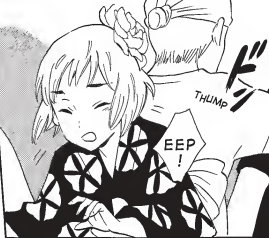








C'mon!

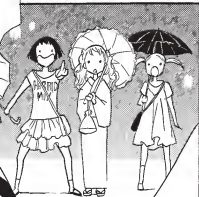


And
Mama
did my
yukata
for me.

It's Tsunomi
Chisato.

P...

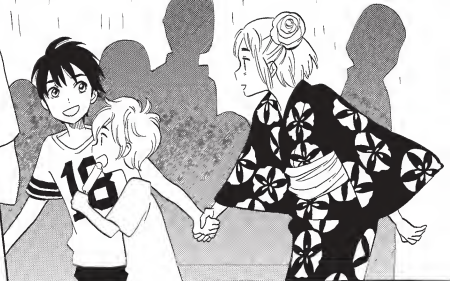
Princess!!
Look!!



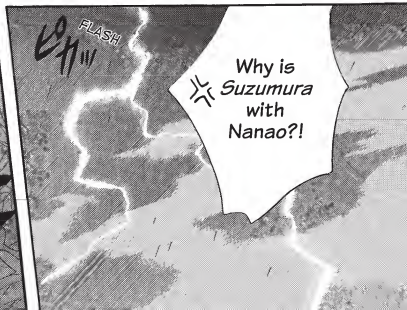
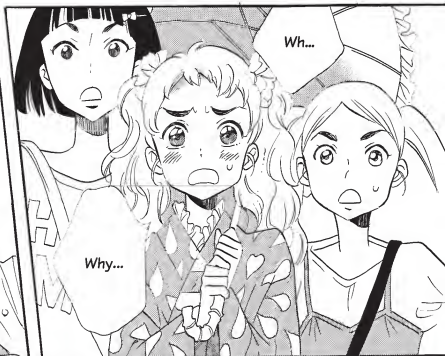
Hee
hee.

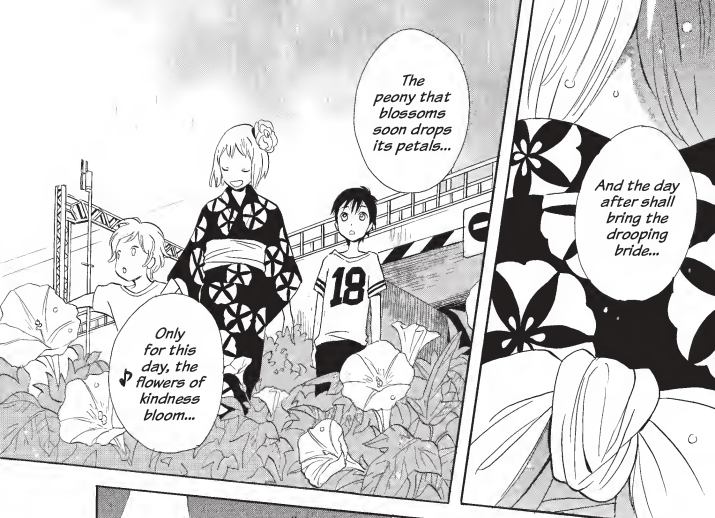
We've got
umbrellas!
Looks like
we come
out on
top.

*Bon,
Bon, the
festival,*



*only
this day
and the
morrow...*

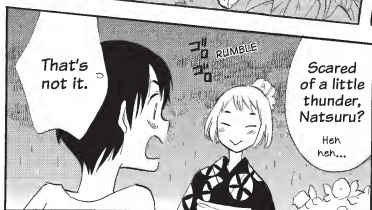




The
peony that
blossoms
soon drops
its petals...

And the day
after shall
bring the
drooping
bride...

Only
for this
day, the
flowers of
kindness
bloom...



That's
not it.

THUNDER
RUMBLE

Scared
of a little
thunder,
Natsuru?

Heh
heh...

if you
stand outside
getting soaked
while watching
a storm, people
will think there's
something
wrong with
you.

You know,
when
you're all
grown up,



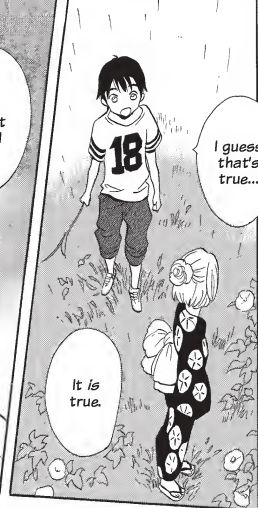
Rio,
are you
okay?

Your
yukata's
getting
soaked...



So
let's get
soaked

while we
still can.



I guess
that's
true...

It is
true.

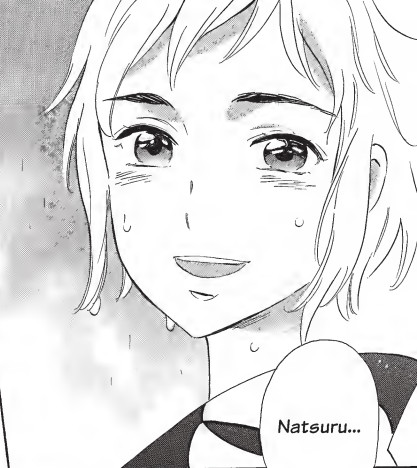


GRAA
AAA
RRR

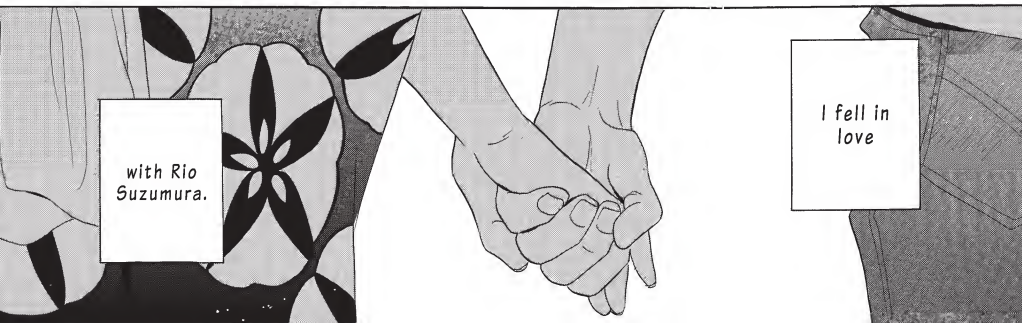
I'm
gonna
eat
all the
rain!!

AH HA
HA!

Sis,
Nat-Nat,
watch
this!



Natsuru...

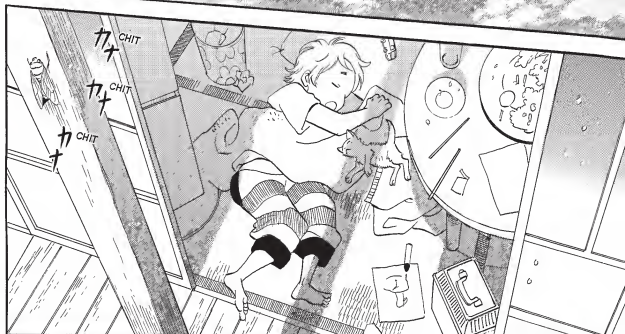


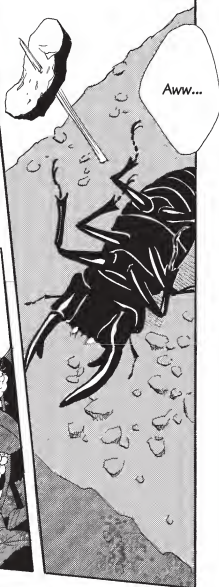
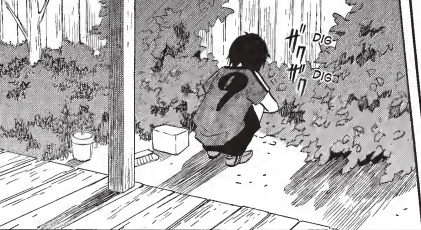
with Rio
Suzumura.

I fell in
love



Thank
you.





Aww...



Wild
straw-
berries?

Or
raspberries
?

There's
so many
...



Whatcha
doing,
Nat-Nat?



Benz
died, so
I buried
him.

Huh?!



Is that
what the
funny
smell
is?

Sort of
sweet,
but
sort of
rotten...

I wonder
if we
can eat
them...



I have
to say
bye!

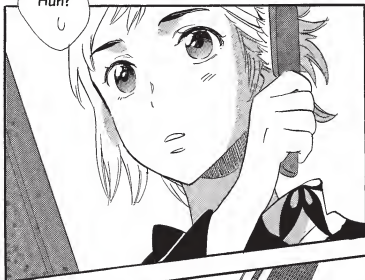
I wanna
see him
again!

Where'd
you
bury
Benz?

Awww!

He already
seemed
pretty weak
when we
found him.
It was just
his time...

Huh?



Ha ha!
No way...

Maybe he
already
went to
Heaven.



I didn't
bury him
that deep,
though...

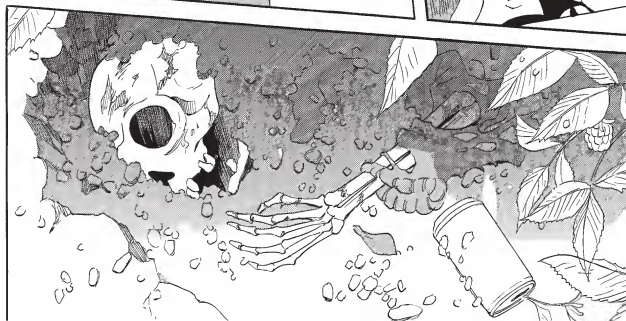
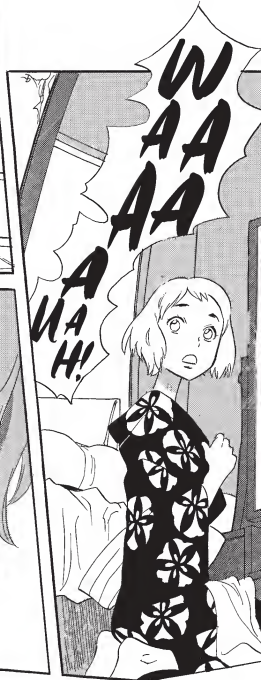
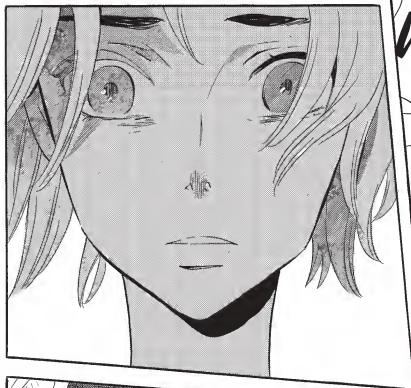


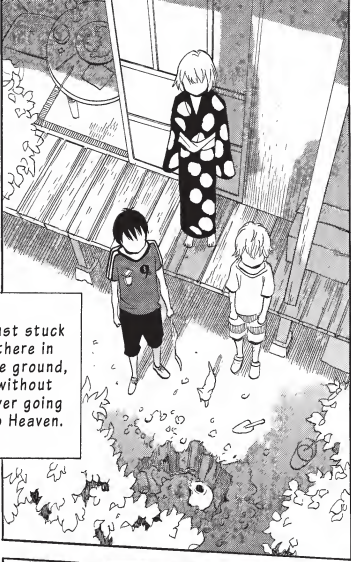
That's
weird.
He's
gone.

I buried
him right
here...

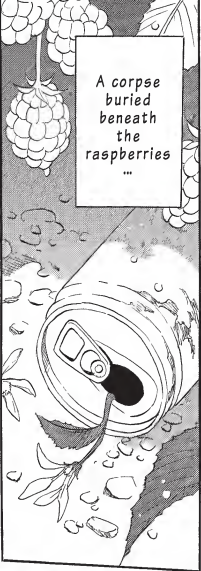




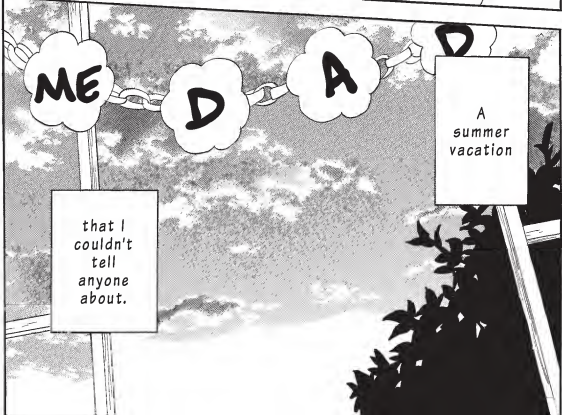




Just stuck
there in
the ground,
without
ever going
to Heaven.



A corpse
buried
beneath
the
raspberries
...



ME

D

A

A
summer
vacation

that I
couldn't
tell
anyone
about.



chapter 4



くらちゃ
KRUNCH

You just
gotta have
crab in
fried rice.

Yep...

MNCH
むっちゃ

You know
we can't
afford the
real thing.

Dad,
that's
imitation
crab.

Oh...

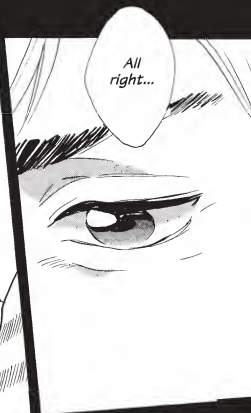




WHACK

110

I'm off to
Alaska to
get you
kids some
real crab!!



All
right...



Dad!!

Uhm...
It's up
high
on the
map...



Dad!!

We
don't
need
crab!!

What
are you
talking
about
?!

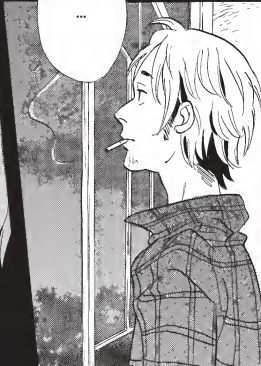


Huh?

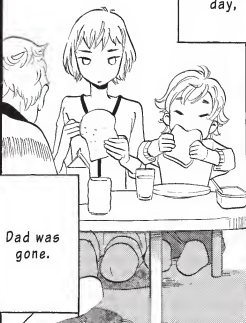
Wh...

Alaska?
Is that
a super-
market?





When we
woke up
the next
day,



Dad was
gone.



And
make sure
Grandpa
doesn't fall
when he
goes to the
bathroom.

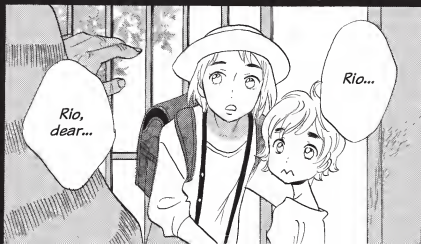
Uh-huh!

HMM!

Don't
go to
the play-
ground by
yourself.

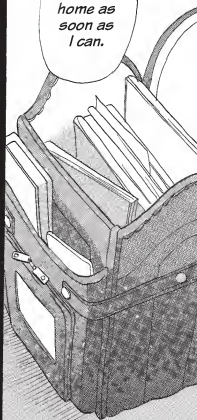
Okay,

I'll come
home as
soon as
I can.



Rio,
dear...

Rio...

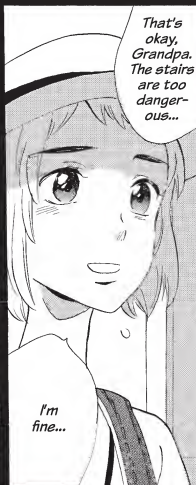


See
you later.



That's
okay,
Grandpa.
The stairs
are too danger-
ous...

I'm
fine...



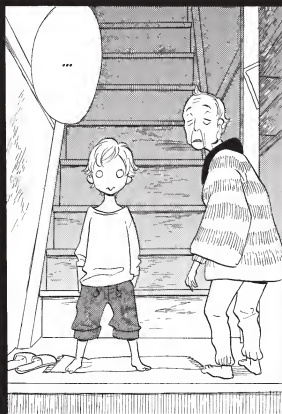
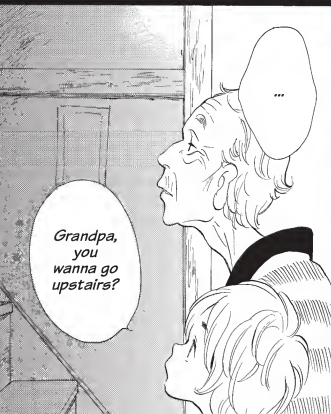
Let
Grandpa
give you
a little
pin
money.

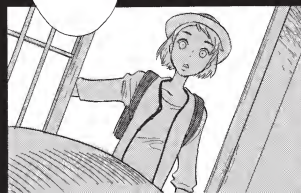
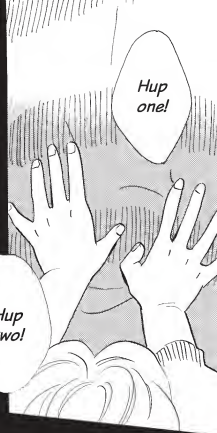
You're
such a
good
girl...

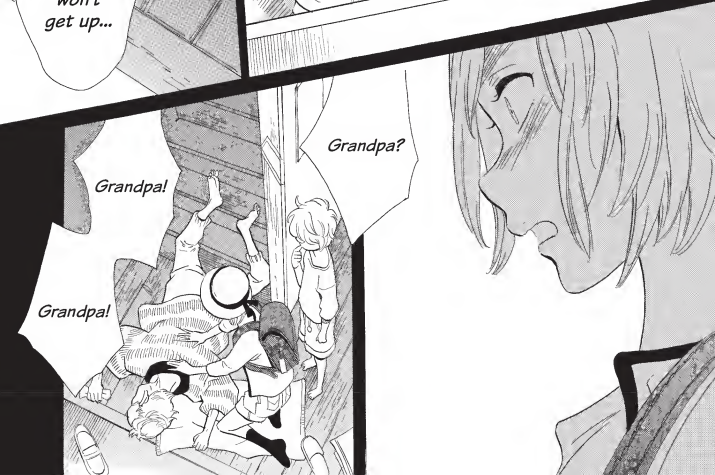
Wait
just a
moment
...

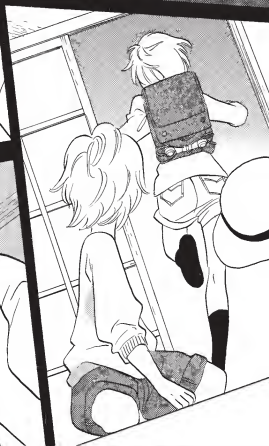
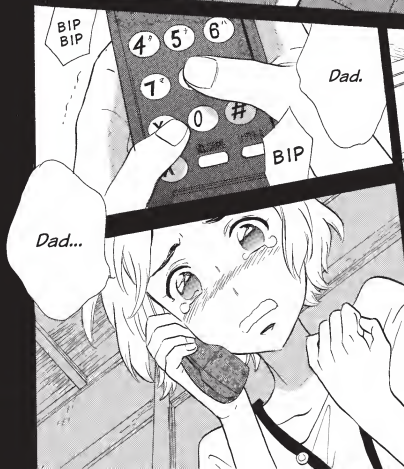
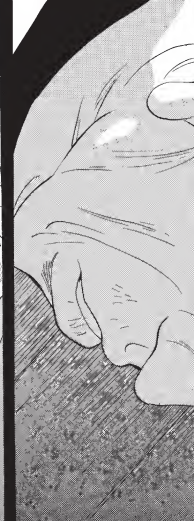


Grandpa,
you
wanna go
upstairs?





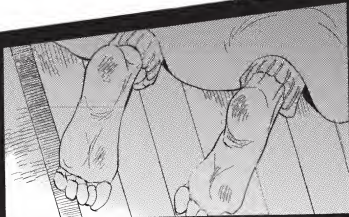


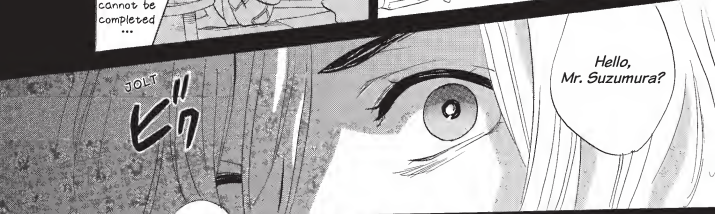
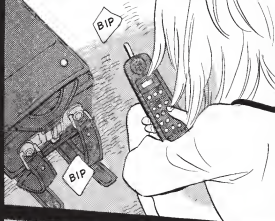


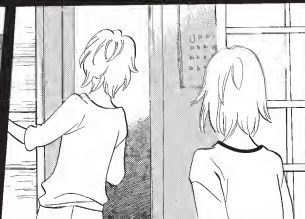
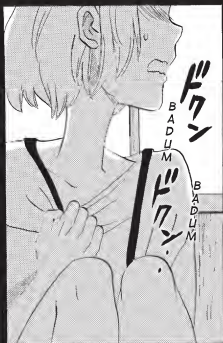


We're
sorry.
Your call
cannot be
completed
at this
time.

The party
you are
trying to
reach may
be outside
the service
area or...

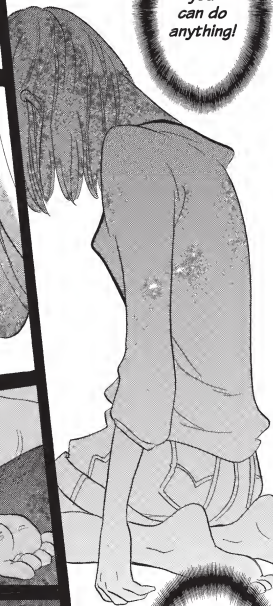




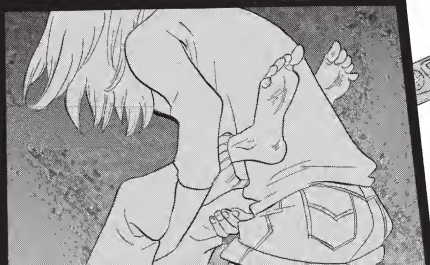
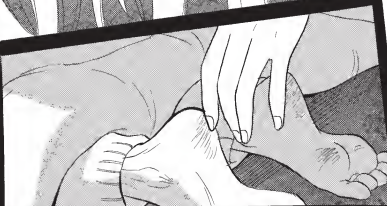




*I'm so
glad
you're
here,
Rio...*



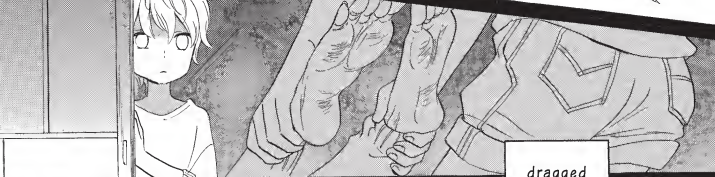
*Rio,
you
can do
anything!*



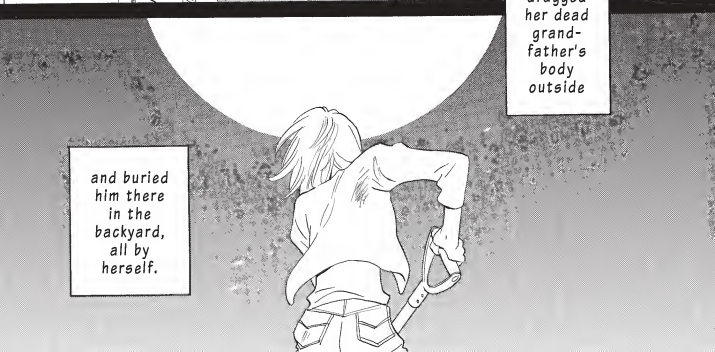
*I just
know
I can
depend
on you!*



Rio



dragged
her dead
grand-
father's
body
outside



and buried
him there
in the
backyard,
all by
herself.



N...

No...



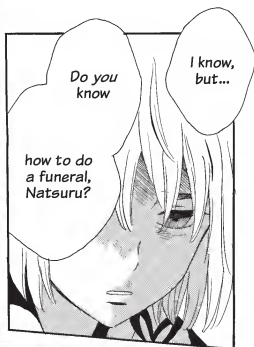
You
can't
just...

bury him
here like
this...

It's not
right...

No...







A close-up of a young girl with short, light-colored hair. She has a distressed expression, with wide, tear-filled eyes and a large, open mouth as if shouting or crying out. Her face is covered in sweat or tears, and her eyebrows are furrowed. She is wearing a dark-colored top.

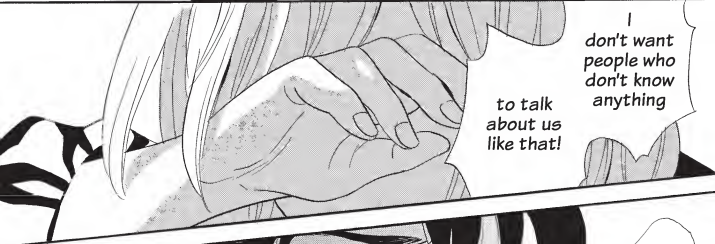
he's
still my
dad!

I
couldn't
stand
it.

Even
if he is
a jerk,

D

A



A close-up of the same girl from the previous panel. She is holding her right hand up to her face, with her fingers spread. Her expression is one of anger or determination, with a slight frown and a determined gaze. She is wearing a dark-colored top.

I
don't want
people who
don't know
anything

to talk
about us
like that!

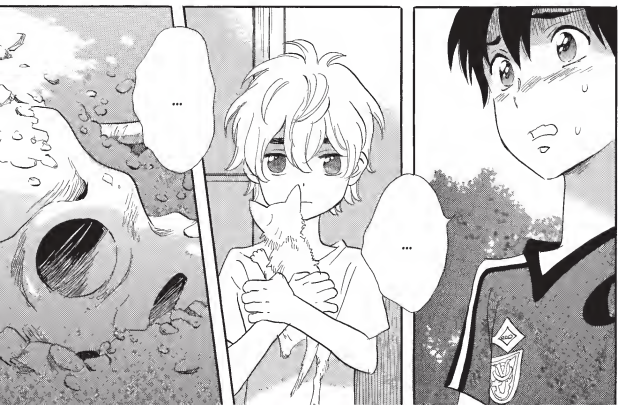


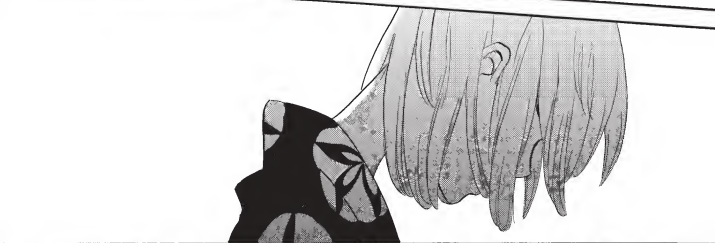
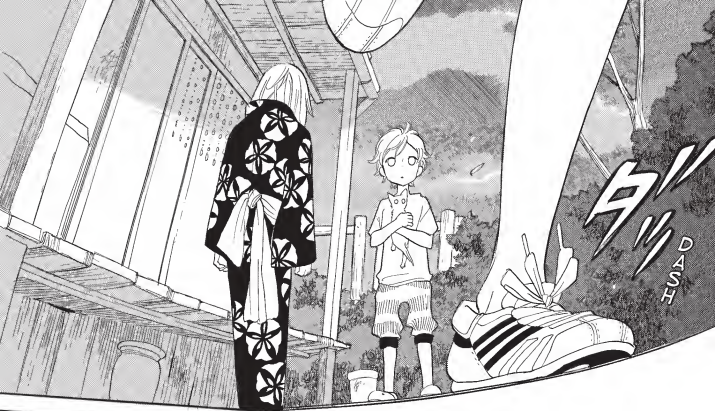
A close-up of a young boy with dark hair. He has a determined expression, with wide, intense eyes and a slight frown. He is wearing a dark-colored top.

I have to
protect
everyone...

So I...

have to
do the
right
thing...





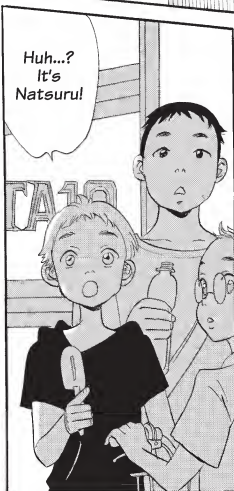


I thought
you'd be
at soccer
camp.

In your jersey
and everything.



Huh...?
It's
Natsurul!

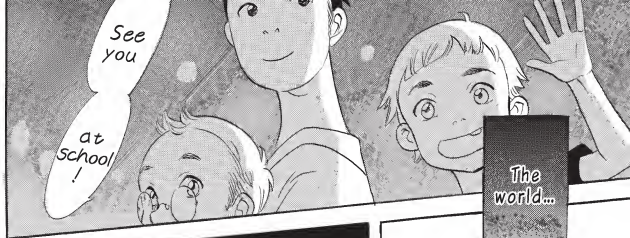


The
festival
was
today...

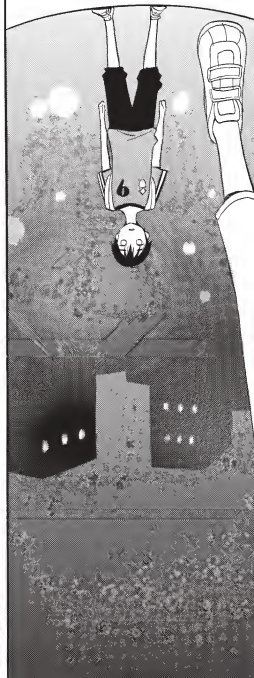
I
would've
invited
you.

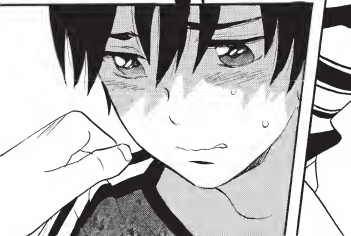
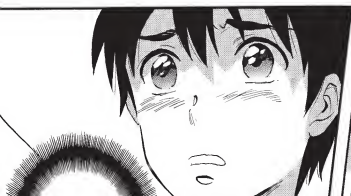
Did you
know?

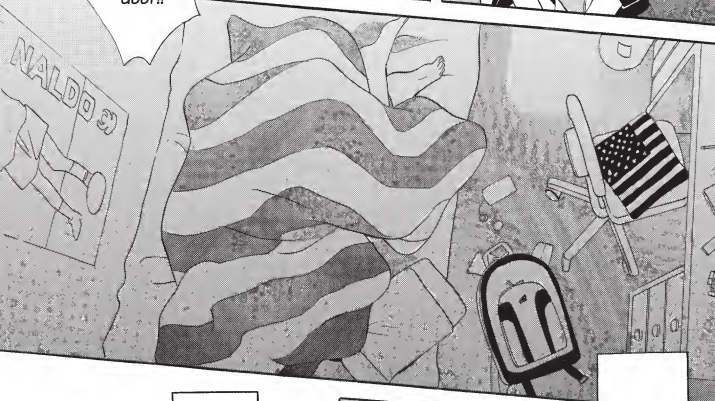




was so
far away.







But if
I keep
quiet,

does that
make me an
accomplice?



will Rio
get
arrested?

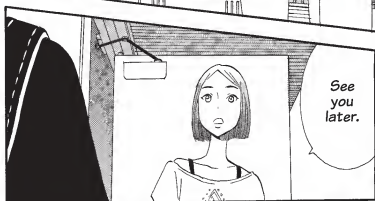
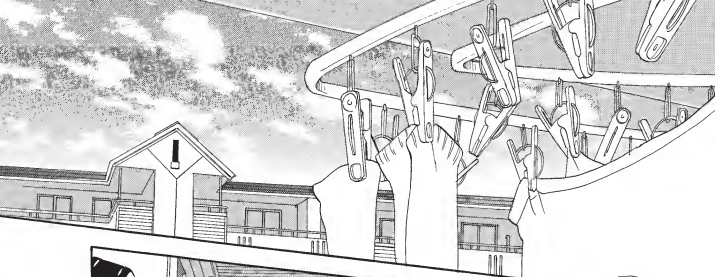
If I tell
anyone,



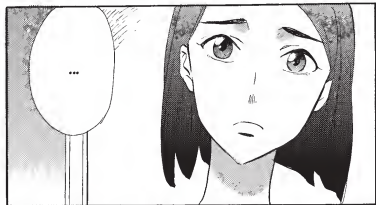
with her
skinny
arms

Rio
buried
him

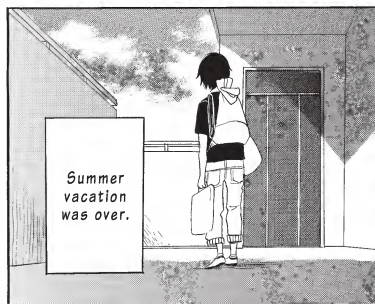
all by
herself...



See
you
later.



...



Summer
vacation
was over.



You
didn't
forget
anything?

You've
got lots
of stuff
on your
first day
back.

Yeah...



Aww, crap!
Lemme
copy your
homework.

Hey, it's
been a
while!

You're
all tan!



RUSTLE
f4.

I'll come
around
and collect
them to
put up!

Please
have your
sketch
assignments
out on your
desk.



He says
it's much
prettier
long.

If I even
talk about
cutting
it short,
Daddy
gets
mad...

Heh heh

Mama
curls it for
me every
morning.



Princess!
Your hair
is so
pretty!

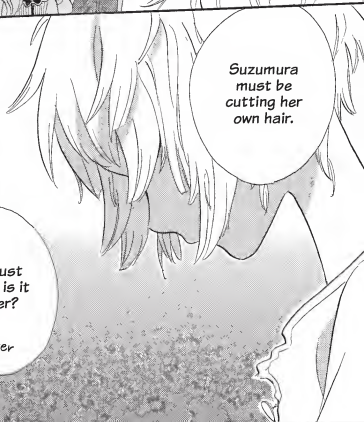


Oh my
gosh,
look...



Is it just
me, or is it
dirtier?

Snicker



Suzumura
must be
cutting her
own hair.

Suzumura

...

Her dad
still
hasn't
come
home...

...

And your
clothes...

Your
mother
won't buy
you new
ones...?

Are you
all right?

Your
hair's all
messy.

Would
you like to
borrow my
brush?



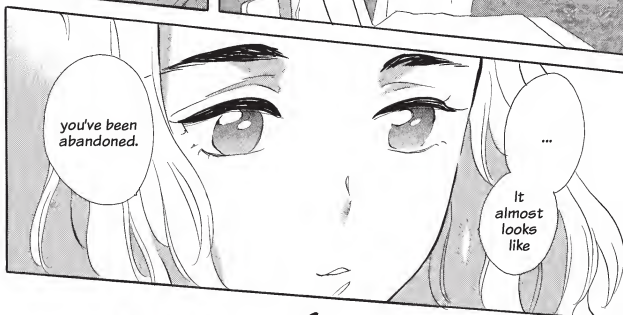
...



It's not your fault that your parents don't take care of you.

I think it's just awful when kids have to suffer.

If you need help, talk to me, okay?



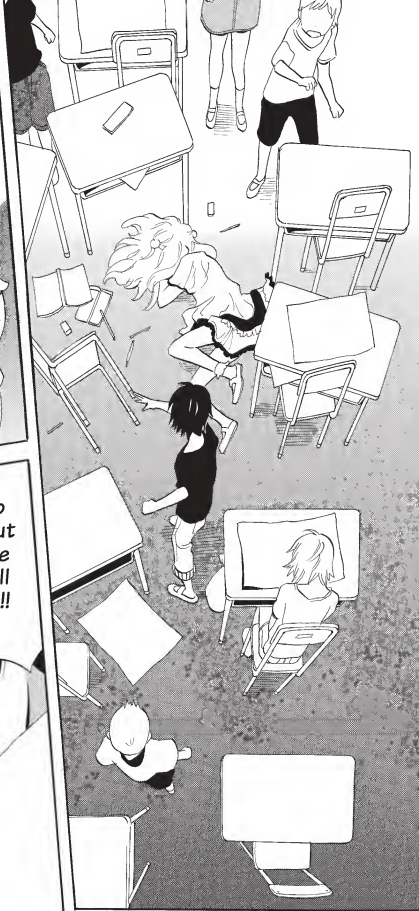
you've been abandoned.

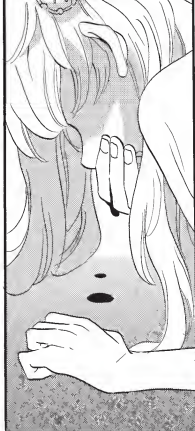
...

It almost looks like

SLAP



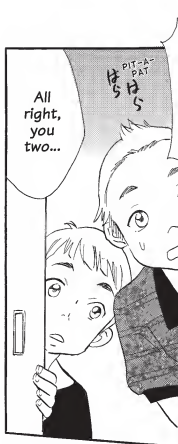




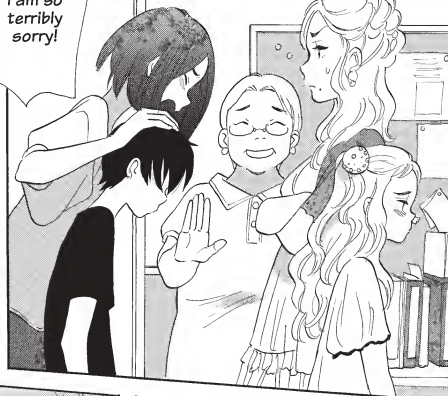


I'm
so,

so
sorry!

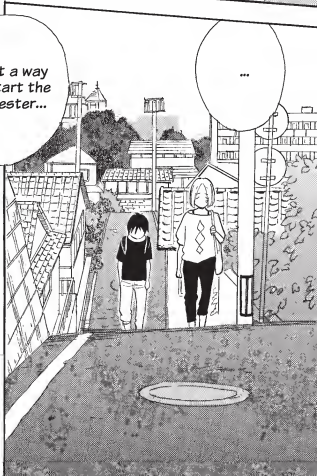


I am so terribly sorry!



Can't believe I was called in...
It's like a soap opera...

What a way to start the semester...





Something's been
wrong with
you since
summer
vacation!

You
won't get
away with
staying
quiet
forever!

Natsuru!!

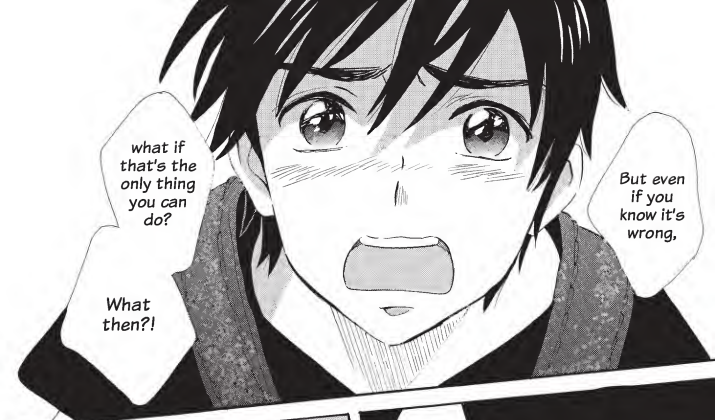


No
matter...

the
reason...

What
happened?
What
happened?!

It's *never*
okay to hit
a girl, no
matter what
the reason!
You know
that!



what if
that's the
only thing
you can
do?

But even
if you
know it's
wrong,

What
then?!

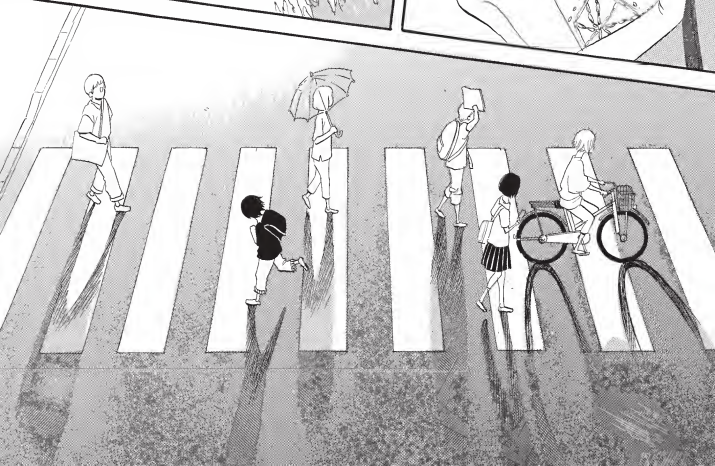
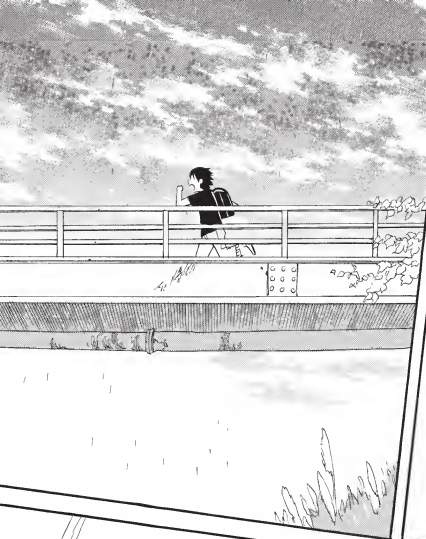


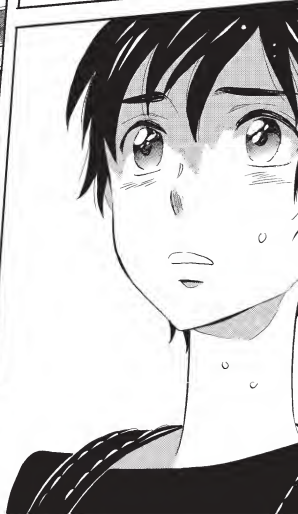
What
else
could I...

What
was I
supposed
to do?!

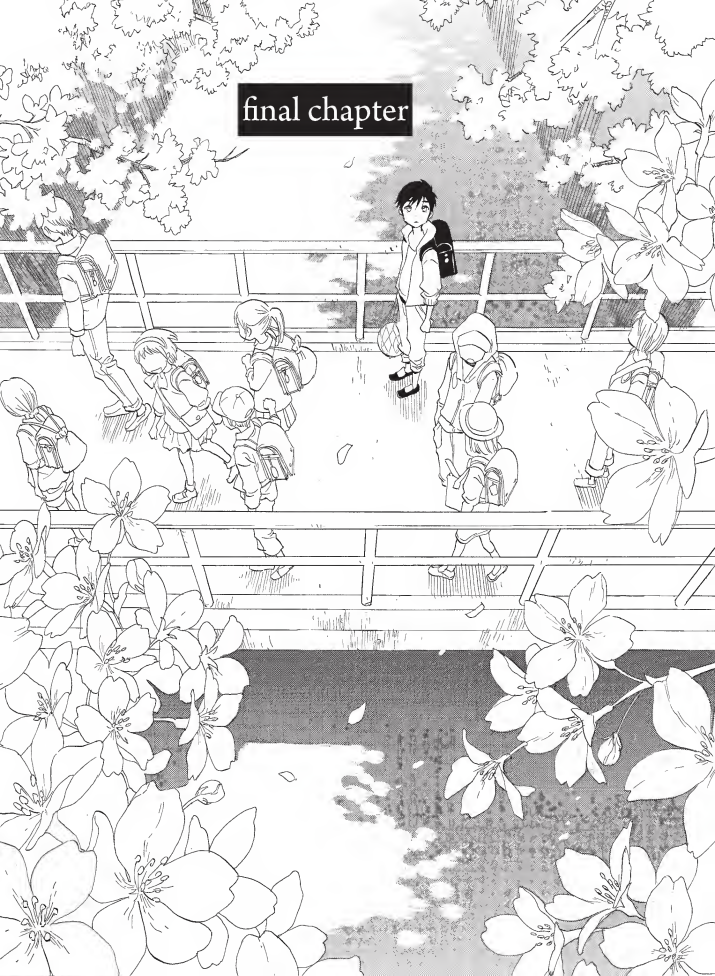


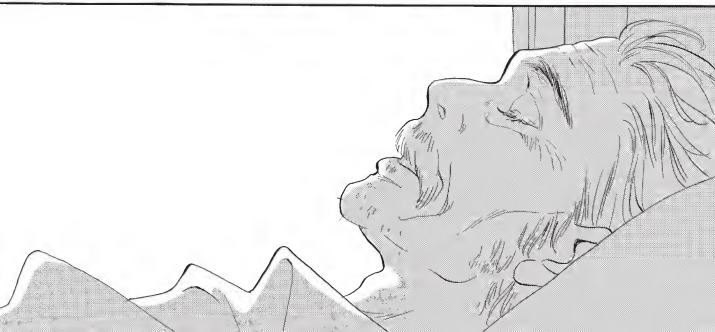
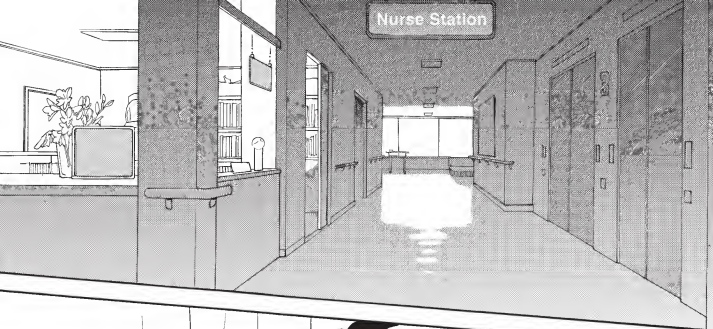
Natsuru!!

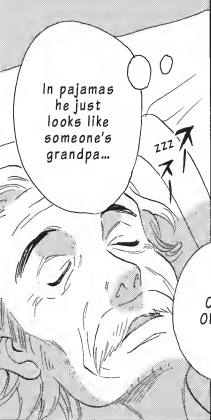




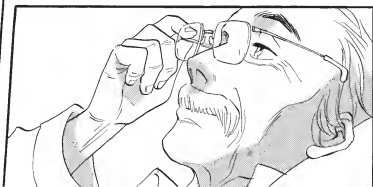
final chapter

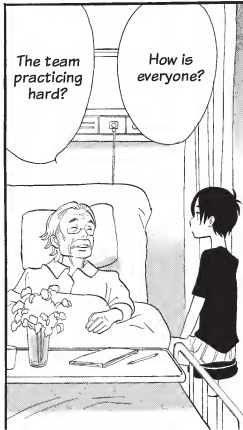






Coach
Okada...









Let's play
soccer
again
sometime.



Natsuru
...



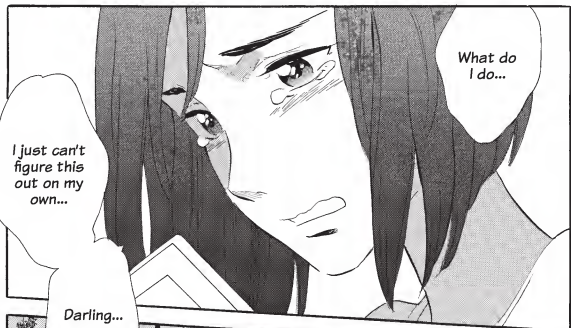


Natsuru's
acting so
strange...

What
do I
do...?



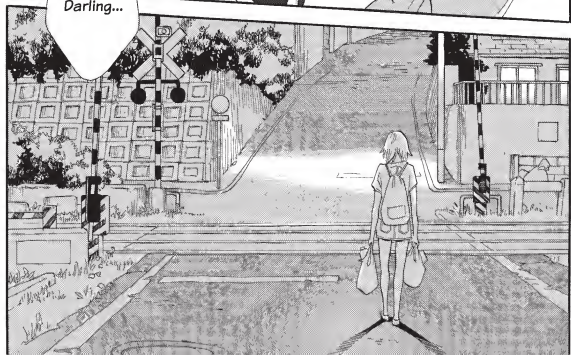
Sweet-
heart...

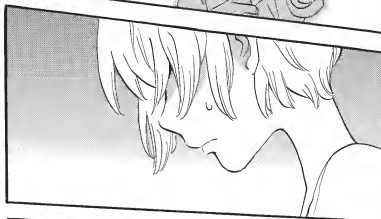


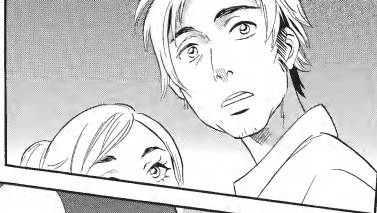
What do
I do...

I just can't
figure this
out on my
own...

Darling...







WHUD
L
#



Where's
the
crab?

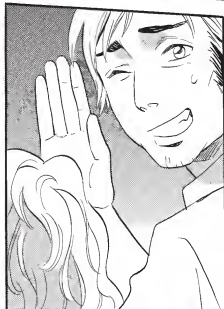
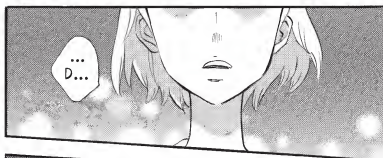
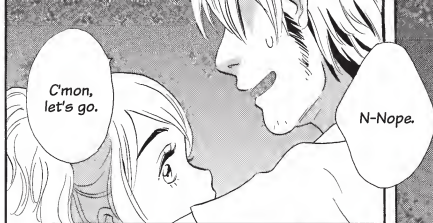


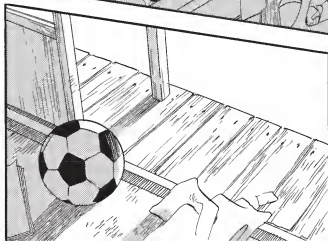
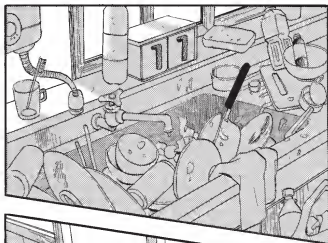
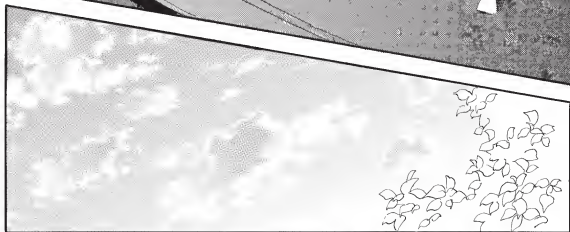
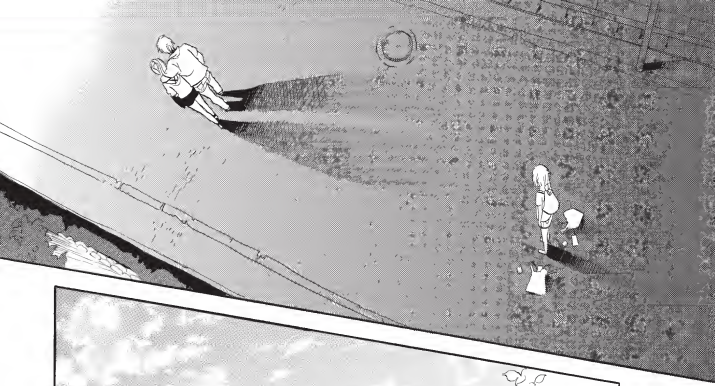
Huh?

Do you
know
that
kid?

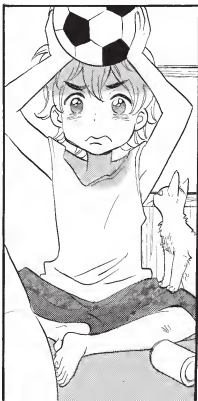
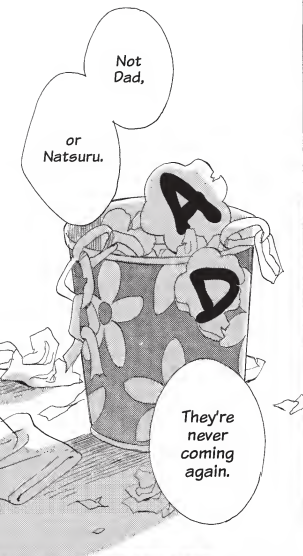


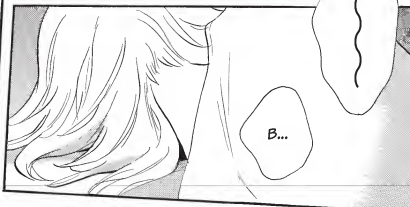
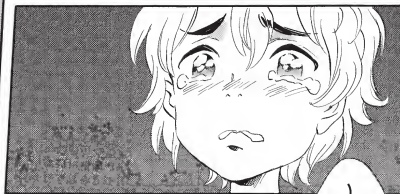
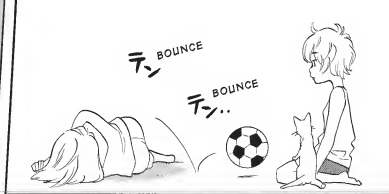
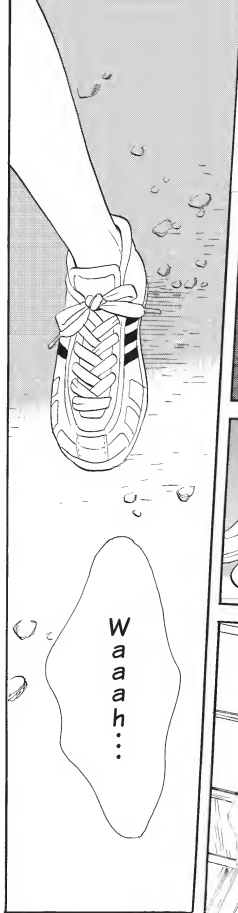
How
was
Alaska
...?





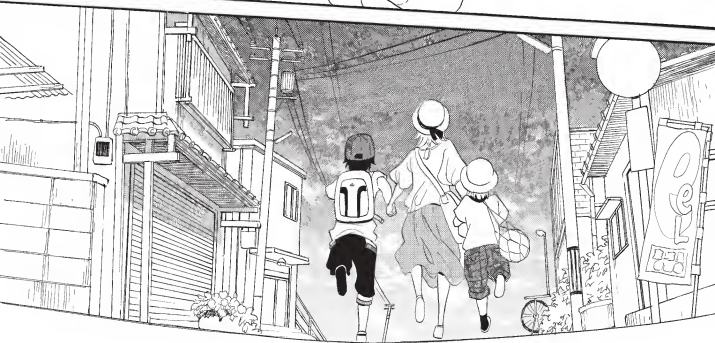
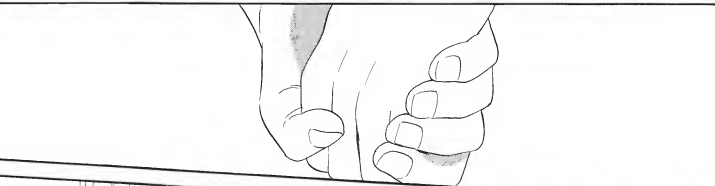


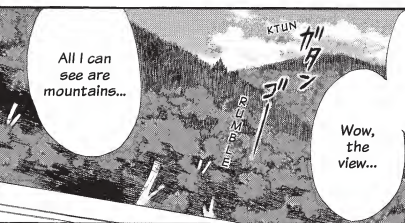
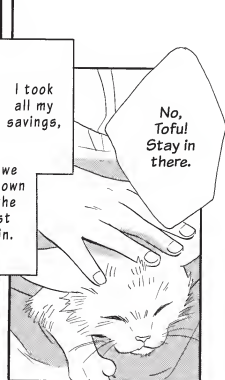
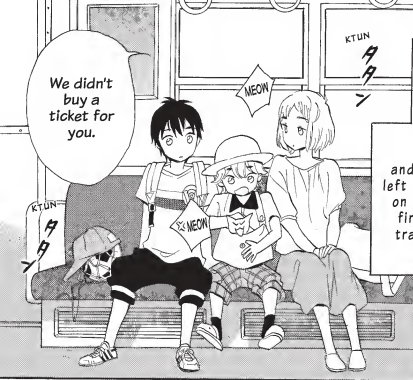






Rio.



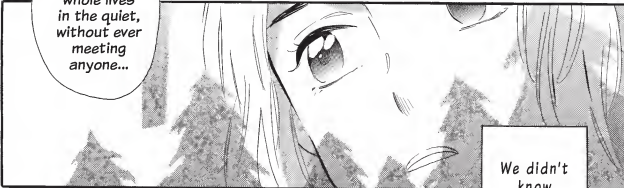




Maybe
there are
animals
nobody's
ever seen

I wonder
what's
out there
in those
mountains
...

that get
to live their
whole lives
in the quiet,
without ever
meeting
anyone...



We didn't
know
where
we were
going.



Note-
book.

Clothes-
pin.

K... K...
ka...

KA-
BOOM!

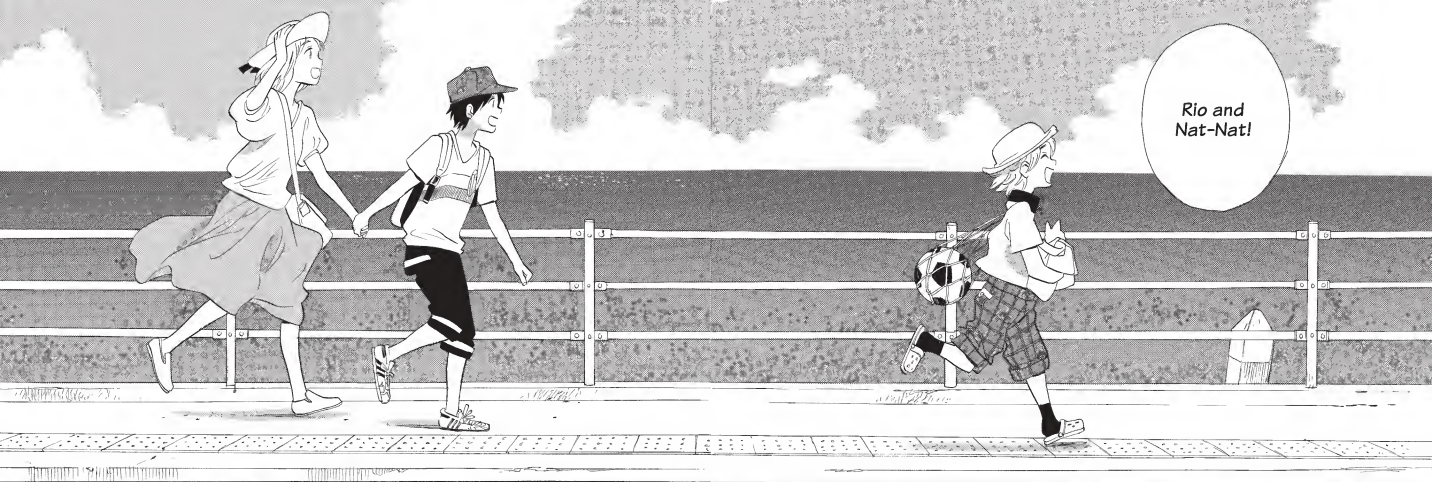
HushU

KTUN

But
nobody
asked.

KTUN
A
A
A
?



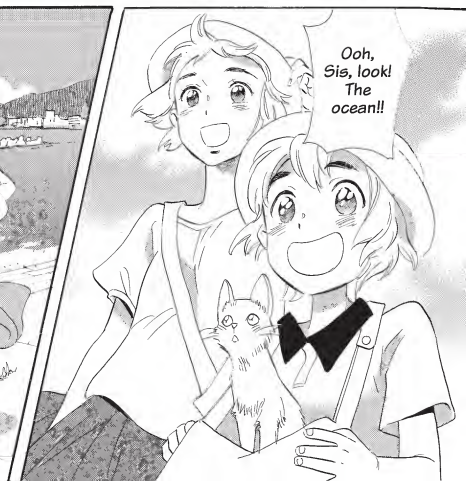
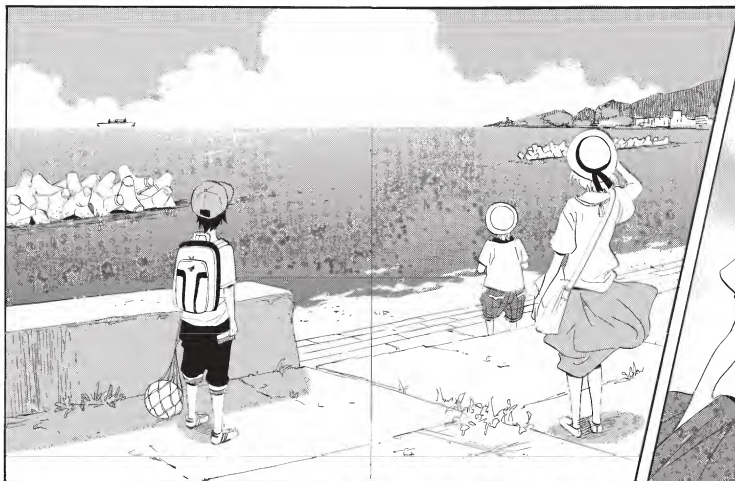


Rio and
Nat-Nat!

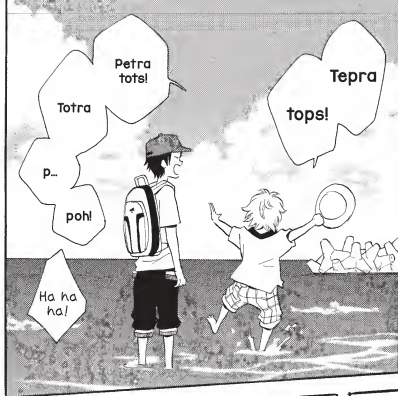


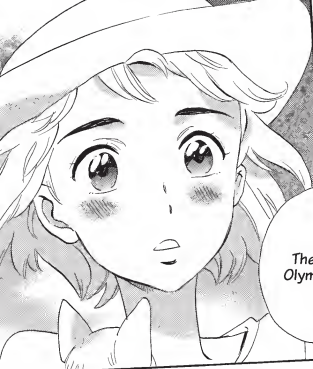
They're
tetra-
pods.

What's
that?
A jungle
gym?!



Ooh,
Sis, look!
The
ocean!!





The Rio Olympics!



Hey,
the next
summer
Olympics

are gonna
be in Rio.

The
Japan
Olympic
team?!
That's
normal?



I wonder
if I can
make it
in time...



I just
want

to be
a

normal
bride...



What
do you
wanna be,
Rio?

Yuuta...

...

Uhm...

Uh,
that
was...

told me
that you
said I'm
cool...

Huh? U

Whose?

Aww...

You just
meant
my
helmet
...?

No.
You are
cool.

...

back
when
they had
the bike
safety
class...

You were
the only
one who
had a cool
helmet...

U That's
all...

But you had an
old lady bike.



When
you run,



Whenever
we play
soccer in
gym class,
nobody
can keep
up with
you.

Because
you're so
fast.



I can
hear the
wind,

and it's like
the whole
field sways.



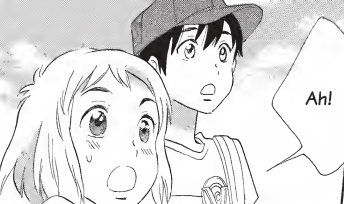
Natsuru...

When you
grow up,

you might
be taller
than me.



Like this,
maybe.



Ah!



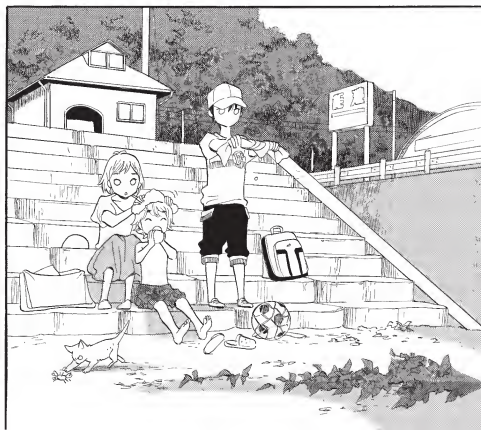
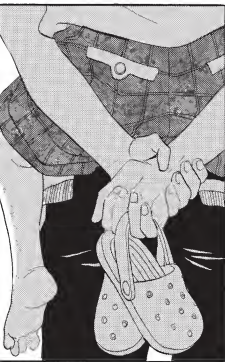
Yuuta's swimming!

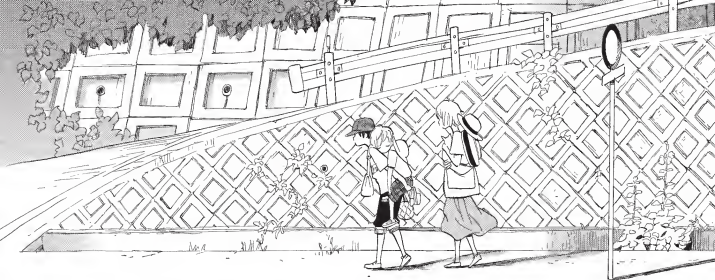
HEE
HEE



She was so cute

that it hurt.





I've never
been this
far away



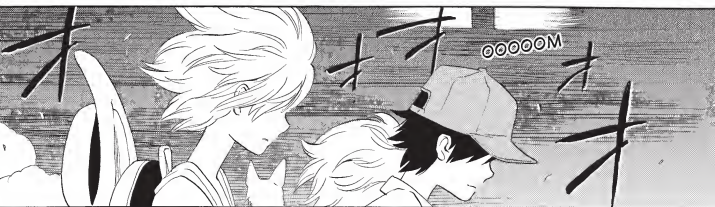
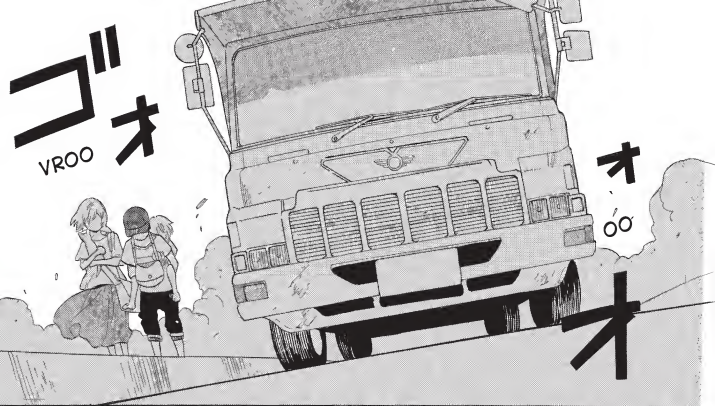
from
home
without
Mom
before.

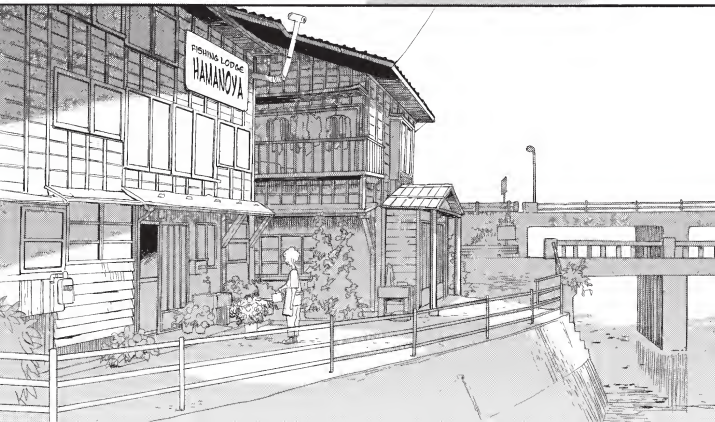
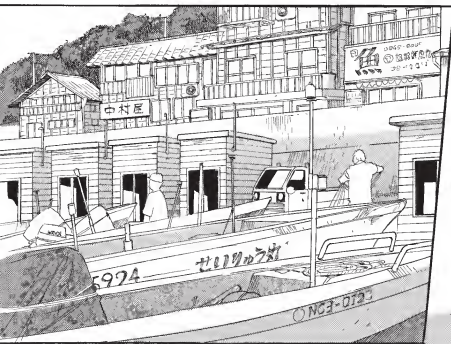
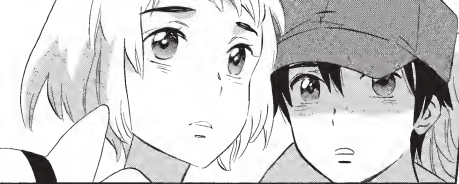


Is he
too
heavy?

Want to
switch?

I'm
fine.







This
is an inn,
right?

Can we
stay
tonight?

E-
Excuse
me...



it's jellyfish
season.
You can't go
swimming,
OK?

...

Yes,
but...



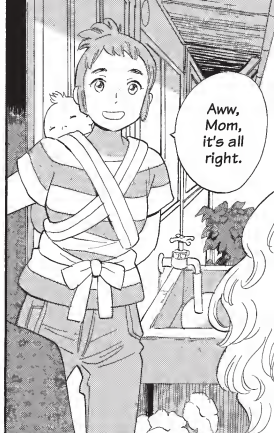
...

Where
are you
folks?

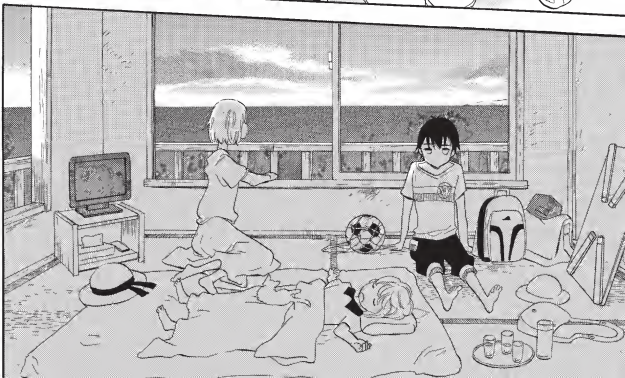
Summer
vacation's
over,
isn't it?

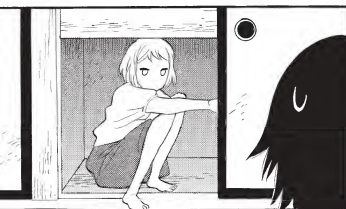
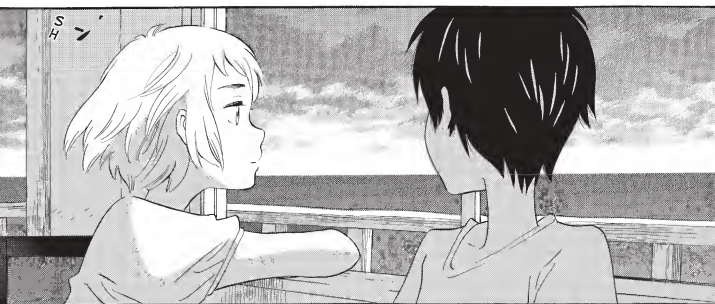
Are
you kids
here

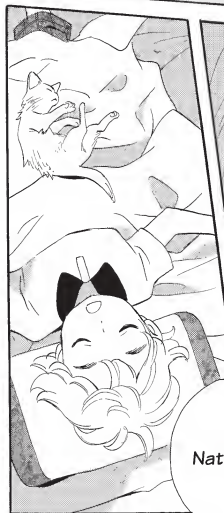
by
yourselves?

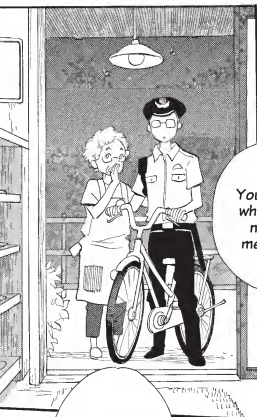


And I can scrape something together for dinner.





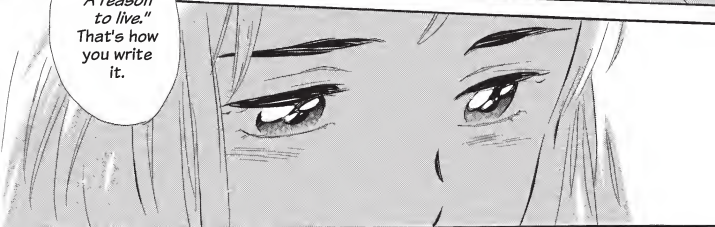




You know
what my
name
means?

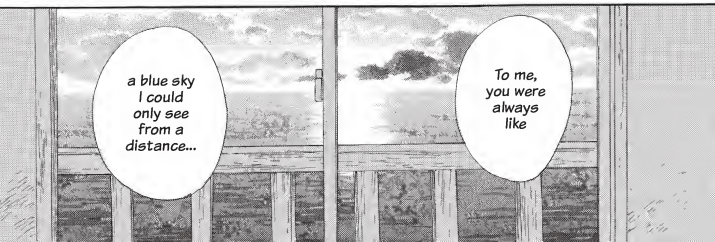


"A reason
to live."
That's how
you write
it.



a blue sky
I could
only see
from a
distance...

To me,
you were
always
like



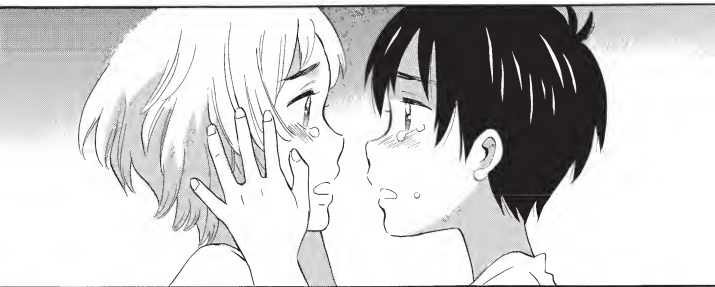
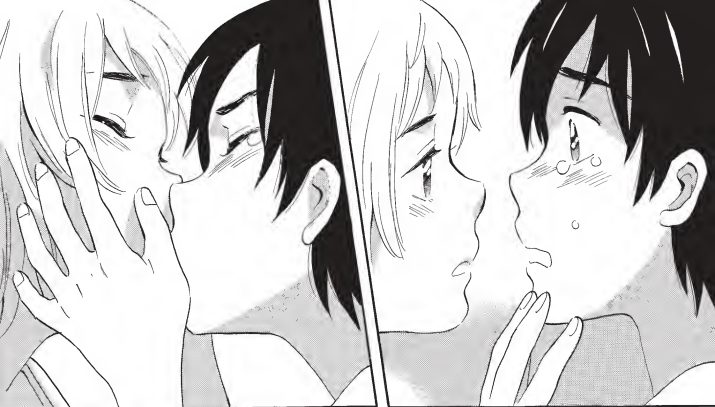


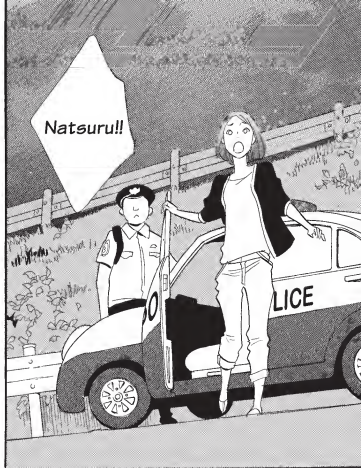
Thank
you,
Natsuru.

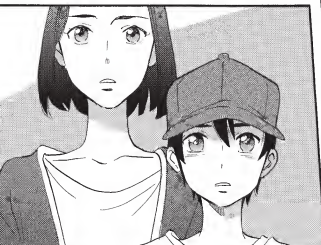
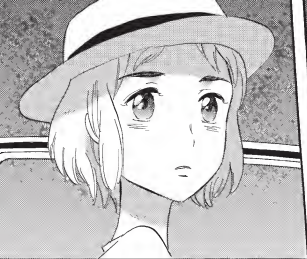
I never
dreamed
that
you'd
become

part
of our
family...









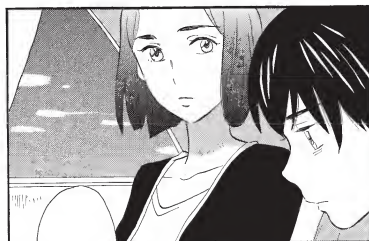
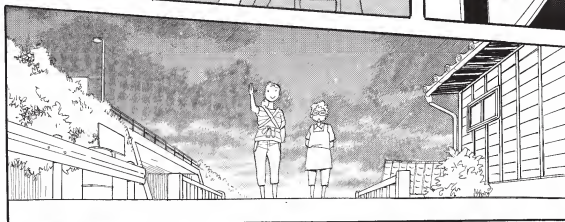
Oh,
thank
you.

I'm
sorry you
couldn't
stay...

Hang
on!

but eat
this.

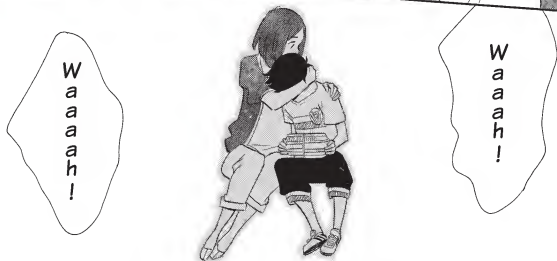
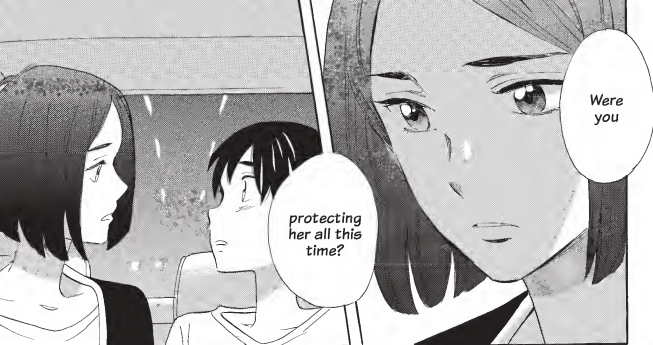
TAP
コン
コン
TAP



...

Natsuru.







...

Rits...



"the
gods
will
see,

and I'll get
better."

"If you're a
good boy,
and listen
to your
mother,"

"So wait
for me
and be
good,
okay?"



When
Dad was
sick,

in the
hospital,
he told
me...

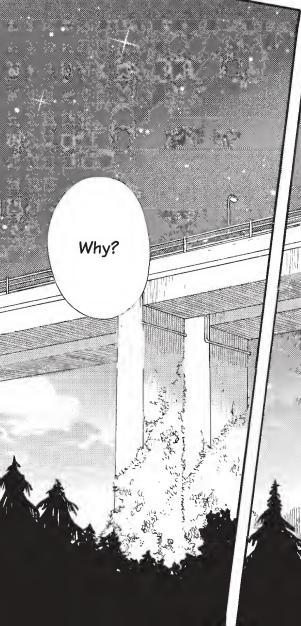




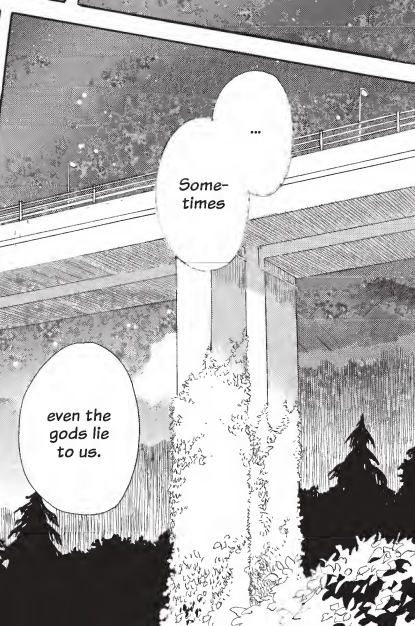
So I must
not have
been good
enough.



But he
died...



Why?



...

Some-
times

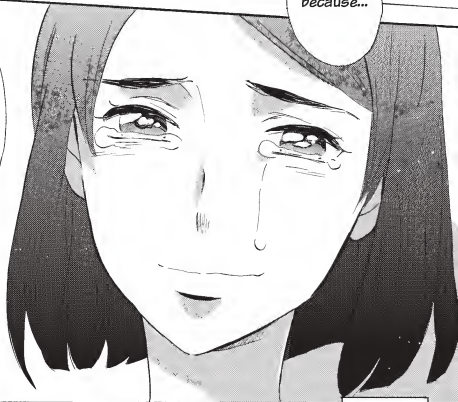
even the
gods lie
to us.



It's
because...

they
love
you

very
much.



Maybe
because
I was so
little.

all that
sad when
Dad died.

I
wasn't

Rits...



The
gods
lie.

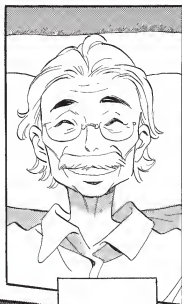
They lie
because
it's the
best
they
can do.



...I
know.

So I'm

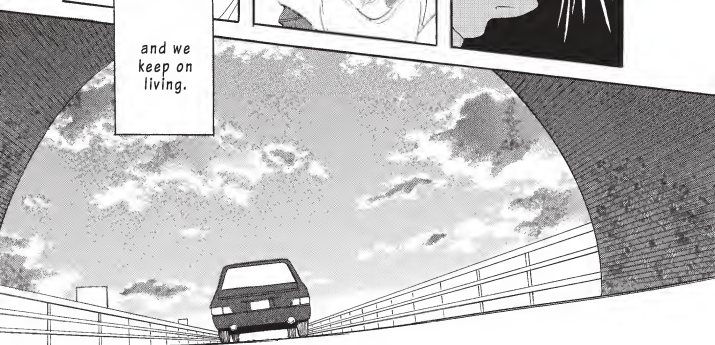
okay
now.



and we
keep on
living.



We reach
out for
their lies





The next day,

after Rio told the police what had happened, they searched the garden

and found her grandfather's remains.



According to the tabloids and the gossip shows on TV,

apparently he was just



"sick of living at home."



Rio's father wasn't a fisherman.

He never went to Alaska. He'd been staying with a nightclub hostess, in the very same town.

...was
what
Ritsuko
had to
say.

If it was the
mother who'd
abandoned
them, they'd
be tearing
her apart.

Ironically,
while Rio had
only been
trying to keep
the world's
prying eyes
away from
her father,

77 WHOAAA

I
punched
a few
more
kids.

Rumors
about Rio
spread
through
the
school.

all the
attention
landed on
her—the
sixth-grade
girl who
buried her
grandfather
by herself.

But I
don't
care.

Ritsuko
kept getting
called into
school to
apologize,
but she
never
scolded
me for
it.

Now my
reputation
at school
has hit rock
bottom.

8 whole
centimeters.

I grew

One
day in
winter

I went
to where
Rio's house
used to be.
It was a
vacant lot.

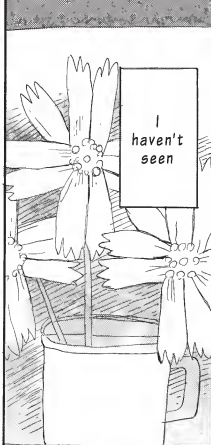
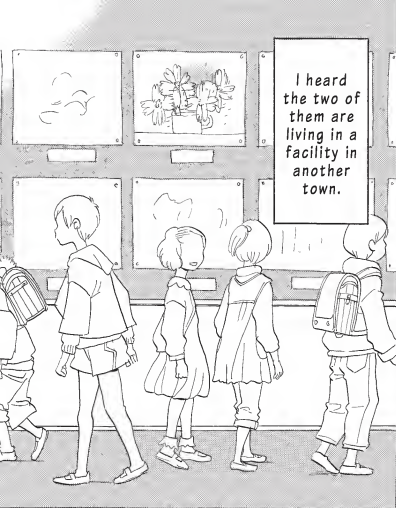


But Rio
must have
been sad
about it.

Seeing
that empty
house fall
into
disrepair
had been
heart-
rending.

I felt a
little bit
relieved.



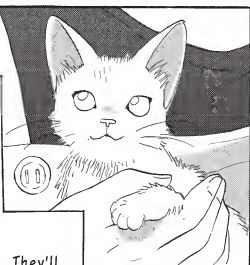


Grade 6 Class 2
Rio Suzumura

either
Rio or
Yuuta
since
that
day.

Tofu was
adopted,
thanks
to the
efforts
of animal
rescue
volun-
teers.

They'll
have to
remove
her
paralyzed
foot.





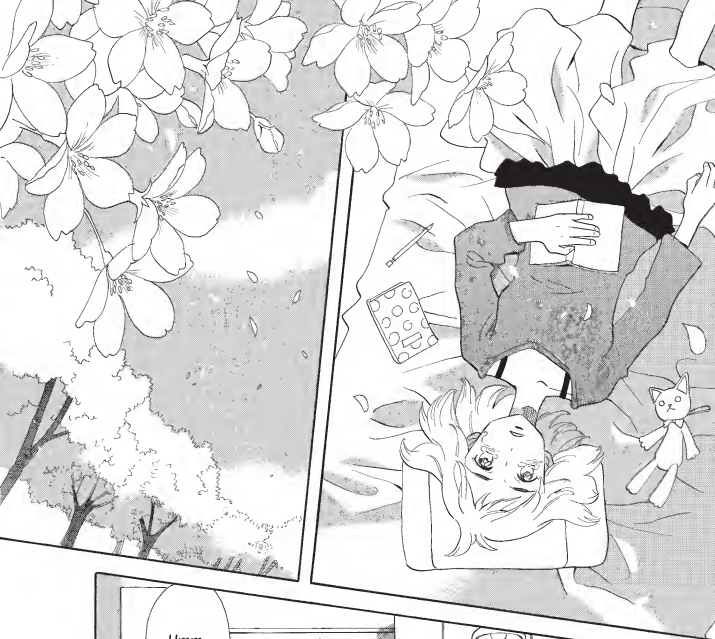
A cat
with one
missing
foot...

But she
learned
to run
with
three
feet.

There's
nothing
sad about
that.

Go!

Go!



Coach
Okada's
going
to come
cheer you
on!

I'm so
glad.

When you
start middle
school,
you'll join the
soccer club
instead...

So
tomorrow's
the last
game with
your team,
huh?

Yeah.

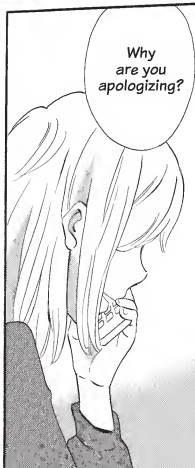
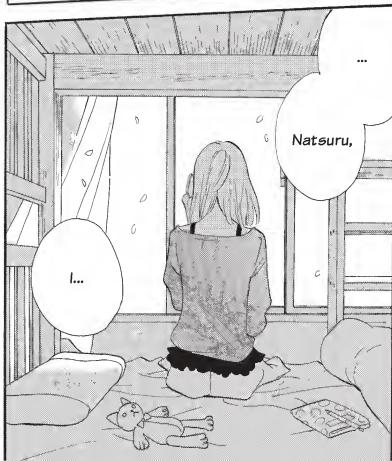
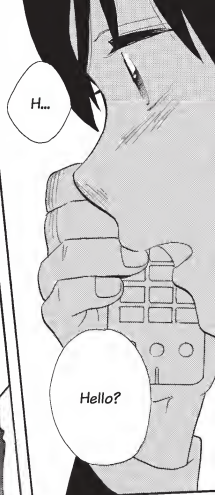
are
kinda
heavy...

Middle
school
uniforms

It's Rio!

Natsuru!!

It's for
you!





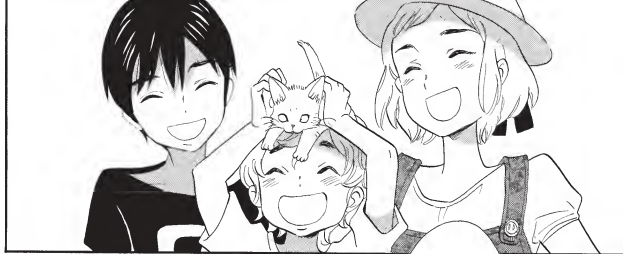
I
dreamed

that
you were
a soccer
star.

I have
this
feeling

it'll
really
come
true.





Natsuru...

We'll see
each other
again.



END

The Gods Lie

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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